



*[Wide World Photo.]*

COLONEL SEGISMUNDO CASADO

# THE LAST DAYS OF MADRID

*The End of the Second Spanish Republic*

BY

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*Translated with an Introduction by*

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A M.O.

*En este siglo de materialismo abominable, en el que los hombres se debaten en el proceloso mar de las más bastardas apetencias, entre falsedades, cobardías y miserias, hace falta tener templado el espíritu en el crisol de las más arraigadas virtudes, para no dejarse arrastrar por la corriente de positivismo de los tiempos que vivimos.*

*Sali de mi patria porque cometi el grave delito de terminar una lucha fratricida, ahorrando a mi pueblo mucha sangre, que hubiera sido estérilmente derramada. Pocos días después de mi llegada a Londres, cuando empezaba a sentir el frío que produce la humillación injustamente sufrida y la indiferencia egoístamente calculada, tuve la fortuna de encontrar en Ud. un caballero prócer, y que sabe cubrir con gentil modestia las galas de su clara inteligencia y la exaltación de sus sentimientos humanitarios.*

*Me brindó una amistad que cultivo y refuerzo, con afecto hondamente sentido y gratitud que guardaré de por vida.*

*Permitame que le dedique este libro, narración sucinta y clara de un hecho que será trascendente en la perspectiva histórica; libro, que no está vestido con galas literarias, de que carezco, pero que tiene el mérito de estar escrito con sangre de un soldado español que ama a su patria, y enriquecido con la luz que le viene de la verdad estricta.*

EL AUTOR



## TO M.O.

IN this century of abominable materialism, when men follow strange doctrines and are carried off their feet, when lies, cowardice and misery flourish on all sides, a man must keep his spirit tempered in the crucible of the tried and tested virtues, if he is not to be carried away by the current of positivism which is sweeping through our age.

I left my country because I committed the grave fault of ending a fratricidal struggle, sparing my people much sterile bloodshed. A few days after my arrival in London, when I was beginning to suffer from the chill of unjust humiliation and selfishly calculated indifference, I had the good fortune to meet, in you, a gentleman of a rare stamp, whose charming modesty covers a lucid intelligence, and an exalted sense of your duty to humanity.

You gave me your friendship, which I shall cultivate with deeply felt affection, and gratitude which will endure all my life.

Permit me to dedicate to you this book, the brief and clear narrative of facts which will be transcendent in the perspective of history; which wears no literary dress, as I am no man of letters, but which has the merits of being written with the blood of a Spanish soldier who loves his country, and illuminated with the light of truth.

THE AUTHOR

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## INTRODUCTION

THE author of this book will be remembered in England as the Commander of the Republican Central Army who, in the last weeks of the Spanish Civil War, formed a National Council of Defence to replace Negrin's administration and secure peace with Franco on the best possible terms. It is impossible to exaggerate the value of this service to the Spanish people—and indeed to the world. Casado saved hundreds of thousands of lives and prevented the destruction of Madrid and many other cities. He was a soldier who never wished to enter politics, or to emerge from the anonymous fulfilment of his normal duties. He became for a brief while a world figure, not through any ostentatious or noisy careerism, but from simple necessity. He saved a situation which seemed beyond salvation. When the whole wretched story of this most tragic war finally emerges from the confusion of partisan nonsense which has darkened it, no name will stand higher than this one—the name of an obscure officer who, with courage, vision and decision, did more than his duty.

He was born in Nava de la Asuncion (Segovia) on October 10th, 1893. His father, whom he describes with an inimitable Spanish word as “unalphabetic”, was a private soldier when he did his conscription, and a farm

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labourer afterwards. Casado was educated at a village school in which one wretched schoolmaster, "with more goodwill than learning," taught three hundred children. But in securing even that much education the boy was lucky, for at the end of the last century a vast proportion of the Spanish peasantry had no opportunity to learn to read or write.

Casado's parents sacrificed everything to give him a career, and at the age of fourteen he entered the Military College to become a cavalry officer. At seventeen he became a lieutenant, and at twenty-four a captain. He served in Africa in the Cavalry and Air Force, and also on the General Staff.

He was from the first a convinced Republican. That word is perhaps the only one that can be used to describe his sympathies and ideals from boyhood till the moment in which he found himself at the head of the only authoritative body in Government Spain, and until now. Under Primo de Rivera his Republicanism was openly declared, and as a military lawyer he defended every possible republican victim of the dictatorship who was brought before military tribunals. He did this so vigorously that he himself was sent to prison no less than eight times for protests too vigorous or defences too violent during those oppressive years. He was never a politician, and had no use for bureaucracy or political theory. He wanted a republican constitution to be formed and then respected. And he fought consistently before and during the war for the under-dog, a kind of struggle which has always had

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a particular significance in Spain, and for which there has long been such necessity that it has attracted some of the noblest spirits of modern times.

When the Civil War broke out he was in command of the escort of the President of the Republic. He was one of only twenty-five staff officers who remained loyal to the Republic, and who, with no more than five hundred officers of the regular army, had to organise an army of a million and a half of men, with forty thousand senior officers and officers. In August, 1936, he was Chief of General Staff in Somosierra, in September of that year Operations Chief to the General Staff of the War Ministry. From May, 1937, to March, 1938, he was both Inspector-General of Cavalry, and Director of the Staff College. In March, 1938, he commanded the Andalusian Army, and from May until the end of the war he commanded the Central Army.

The book which he has written is a soldier's account of a difficult task ably fulfilled. Again and again in translating it I have been taken back to a school class-room, for his story is strongly reminiscent of the despatches of Julius Cæsar. He is never sensational—his prose is never showy or obscure. In everything he has written he shows a passion for accuracy and detail which has been sadly lacking in almost every book yet written on the Spanish War. He talks bluntly of the appalling situation in Madrid after the fall of Catalonia, when the Republicans were hopelessly defeated, and a devastating offensive could only be a matter of days. He grows bitter

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when he speaks of the Negrin administration, which, while actually ordering the re-sale of provisions and armaments purchased abroad, was repeating its sad parrot-cry of Resist! Resist! though the people starved and the army was powerless. How he and that magnificent Spaniard, Besteiro, intervened and assumed authority while Negrin remained obscurely in the background, how they tried to negotiate peace, and the final tragedy—all this is so dispassionately described, with such documentation and detail, that one feels that at least one chapter in the long story of the war has been written truthfully and honestly.

Casado is a refugee in this country, and it is perhaps the courtesy of a guest which prevents him from ever making his readers feel the shame which Englishmen must feel when they study the history of the Spanish War. In this country, throughout the war, the intelligentsia were "taking sides" like preparatory schoolboys on Boat Race Day, while a nation was committing suicide. To those of us who love Spain and her people the idiot oratory of "Save Spain" meetings was as painful as the "Christian Gentleman" talk of the Franquistas. We did nothing, either as a nation or as human beings, to serve the only cause in Spain, or anywhere else, which was worth serving—the cause of peace. While young Spaniards shot one another, we bandied words like quarrelling neighbours, and the literature produced in this country in defence of one side or the other was a disgrace to our civilisation. The deputations and parties who went on much-advertised journeys to one territory or the other

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and came back whooping their certainty of victory for the side they fancied, the little pamphlets, the ignorant propaganda, the church dignitaries and titled ladies on visits to Barcelona, the evasive replies from Cabinet Ministers to questions in the House of Commons, the merchant ships that carried profitable cargoes and the newspapers who found the war a heaven-sent subject for the silly season, the querulous sermons and the inane negotiations—how grim and shameful they all look now. Before God, as I remember the Spanish War, I feel that the open intervention of the totalitarians was less disgraceful than our own shocked and timorous evasions. For we could have brought peace to Spain, and we only. And we dithered and “took sides”, and talked of bombings, and noisily accepted a few refugees, while a country went up in flames.

There is an incident in this book which seems to me to have a significance so ironic that the English reader must feel sick with shame as he realises it. It is after the surrender, when Franco's forces are entering Madrid, and his followers are rising in every town in Republican territory. A handful of desperate refugees, many of them men who had held positions of the highest responsibility, and all of whom were threatened with instant death, have reached a Spanish port in the harbour of which is a British destroyer. The British Consul is approached. Will the ship convey these refugees to France, where they have permission to land? Yes. They may go on board. *But if General Franco asks that they shall be handed over, the*

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*captain of the ship has orders to comply.* The little story needs no elaboration. And it is typical of Great Britain's attitude to one of the greatest tragedies in history.

Casado is a Republican, fought for the Republic, and would fight for it again. But his story of the last weeks of the war, and as much as he tells of the story of the war itself, will give little support to a partisan spirit on either side. His book makes one thing absolutely clear, and it is something which we have wilfully failed to realise—that this was a war of invasion, waged with some efficiency by one set of totalitarian countries, Germany and Italy, and most inefficiently by another—the Soviet Union. With the Falange as the weapon of the former on Franco's side, and the Communist Party as the fighting arm of the latter on the Republican side, the two opposing groups, with their so-called ideologies brightly paraded, were able to clash and struggle without the inconvenience of a war on their own territory. Meanwhile honest Spaniards in both camps were their dupes, and the democracies shuddered away from the scene, and feared to burn their fingers. It was the most cynical mass murder in history, and all the gallantry and courage of Spain, shown in the food queues of Madrid as bravely as in the Alcazar, could make it none other. The only hope (and that a wistful one) which is left now is that by reading such a book as this, which makes no appeal to the sadist or sensationalist, but is resolutely concerned with facts, we may get at last a little understanding of what has already happened, and what is yet to come.

RUPERT CROFT-COOKE



## CHAPTER I

### THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STATE OF SPAIN IN 1936

#### I

I HAVE been in exile for a month now. It has been a month of acute mental suffering, during which I have never for a moment been able to forget the tragedy of Spain. But when I think of my own people, their nobility, their generosity, their suffering and the way in which they have been persistently misunderstood, and remember my own attempts to serve them during their martyrdom, my own part in the struggle, my conscience, at least, is clear.

I was the leader of a popular movement which caused the fall of an execrable government; a government which had set up a dictatorship and was stifling the wishes of the people in a most cynical and criminal way. By this movement I was enabled to bring a suicidal war to its close, and to save the lives of many thousands of innocent people who would have been needlessly slaughtered. I stayed in Spain in order to save as many as possible of those who wished to leave it, and I did not abandon my post while my presence there could be of the slightest use. Like the other members of the National Council of Defence which we formed, I am living now with the help of a Refugee

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Committee, and we think that our present poverty is the best proof of an honourable stewardship.

With a quiet conscience, therefore, I was prepared to leave the verdict to posterity, for I thought it no more than civil to repay the British Government's hospitality with silence, and I wanted to keep out of the public eye, since I have an inborn hatred for popularity-seeking. Unfortunately this has been made impossible. Dr. Negrin, and a few of his followers, and the Spanish Communist Party, have started a veritable campaign of libel and defamation against the National Council of Defence, and particularly against me, whom they have categorised as "a traitor to the Spanish people." That sort of thing makes it impossible for me to keep silent, and I am determined to give the whole truth of what took place so that the world may know and judge for itself all those who guided the destinies of Spain in the last period of that ghastly war in which she almost perished.

I love my country, but I love truth and justice more, since without these the ideal of patriotism cannot exist. I make no pretensions to be a writer. I am simply a Spanish soldier, anti-political by instinct. The book I want to write will have no literary graces, I am afraid. But I will try to express the precise truth about the bloodshed and mockery of the war. If these were exposed and analysed by a more experienced writer I have no doubt that they would make the most thrilling and lurid reading. I can only present them as an experience, from which some profit might be gained in these moments of universal madness.

During my short stay in London I have been able to realise that the political and social problems of Spain have been almost entirely misunderstood abroad, so that it seems to me necessary that I should begin this book with a clear and succinct explanation of the forces which were working with greater or lesser intensity to make the Civil War inevitable.

After a laborious and unhappy period of formation, with which I shall deal later, two factions emerged; one in defence of Capital, the other as a safeguard for Labour.

*The following were organisations which may be considered as Capitalist:*

The Traditionalists (*Tradicionalistas*).

Spanish Renaissance (*Renovacion Española*).

Popular Action (*Accion Popular*).

The Agrarian Party (*Agrarios*).

Spanish Confederation of Autonomists (*Confederacion Española de Derechas Autonomas*. Known as the C.E.D.A.).

Catalonian Regional League (*Lliga Regional Catalana*).

*All the above had Monarchist sympathies.*

The Progressive Party (*Progresista*).

Radicals (*Radical*).

Liberal Democrats (*Liberal Democrata*).

Conservatives (*Conservador*).

*The above were Republican.*

There was one Syndicalist organisation on the side of

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Capitalism, the *Spanish Falange*, which was neither monarchist nor republican, but Fascist.

*The Labour parties were as follows:*

Basque Nationalists (*Nacionalistas vascos*).

Republican Union (*Union Republicana*).

Republican Left Wing (*Izquierda Republicana*).

Catalonian Left Wing (*Esquerra Catalana*).

*The above may be described simply as Republican.*

Spanish Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Español*).

Communist Party (*Partido Comunista*).

United Catalonian Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Unificado de Cataluña*). Known as the *P.S.U.*

United Marxist Workers Party (*Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista*). Known as the *P.O.U.M.*

Syndicalist Party (*Partido Sindicalista*).

Spanish Anarchist Federation (*Federacion Anarquista Iberica*). Known as the *F.A.I.*

*The above may be described as Republican Workers' Parties.*

There were two Syndicalist organisations on the side of Labour, the General Union of Workers (*Union General de Frabajadores*, known as the *U.G.T.*) and the National Labour Confederation (*Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo*, known as the *C.N.T.*).

It is necessary to examine the formation of these two factions, and appreciate something of the significance and value of the forces which went to the making of them. And for that we must turn to history for a moment.

First let us examine the forces which we have described as capitalist. Of all its parties the oldest and most reactionary must come first—the Traditionalist Party. Its origin goes back to the last century. On the death of Ferdinand VII there was a dispute over the Succession which involved two figures of the Royal House; on the one side the Liberal forces, influenced by changes in France, and on the other side the forces of the Church. The dispute ended in war, in an extraordinarily cruel war, fought over the ruins, both material and spiritual, in which the whole country had been left by the struggle against Napoleon. The Traditionalists, round the person of the Pretender Don Carlos, attracted the most reactionary Spaniards to their banner. They were conquered in the civil wars of the last century, but their forces remained in Navarre, and there, as if in a lighthouse, they remained intact during a whole century, always constituting a threat to any kind of political or social progress in the State.

Spanish Traditionalism has great political purity which it has maintained by its own religious faith throughout its history and wherever it springs up. In its public activities it has shown itself heroic to the point of martyrdom. It has gone back for its tradition perhaps to memories of other wars, so that the Traditionalists have formed their own fighting organisation—the *Requete*. This they have maintained from the beginning and in

the face of all sorts of difficulties. It is a civil body, constructed on military lines, warlike in spirit, and always eager to fight for its motto, "God, Country and King."

It is scarcely necessary to add that the Traditionalist Party was anti-Republican. But I must point out that it was also against the monarchy of Alfonso XIII. This appeared to the Traditionalists too liberal, so that they wished to substitute for it their own form of monarchy, in which the King would be the heir of the Pretender Don Carlos, and the citizen little more than a parishioner of this or that ecclesiastical parish. It is obvious that the Proclamation of the Republic of 1931 was, for the Traditionalists, not so much the announcement of a revolutionary catastrophe, as revolution itself, appearing like a hideous monster on Spanish soil, like the dragon in religious legends, against which they must fight with the sword of faith, as crusaders of "the good cause".

Nobody supposes that the Traditionalist Party was made up entirely of rich people, though certain aristocrats were among its leaders, moral and material heirs of those who had fought in the Carlist wars, bishops, reactionary writers, bankers, etc. But there were men of all classes in it, inspired by a sense of religious brotherhood—especially peasants, who were not educated in schools and institutes in Navarre, but in the church and seminary.

The political force most representative of the monarchists was called the *Renovacion Española*, the "Spanish Renaissance." It was born in the heat of the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, and led by

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Calvo Sotelo, while its members were drawn from among the aristocrats, financiers, great landowners, and rich industrialists. It was not of great importance, since although it could make its influence in high places felt by various means, it lacked tradition and had no popular following. Its programme could be summarised as an attempt to raise the monarchy which had just fallen, and on this account it was considered absolutely outside the new political life of the country. It was, the people said, a party of elegant young men.

However, this reactionary party, whose outlook was a materialist one, was led by intelligent and audacious men, and attracted a good many officers and soldiers, so that in spite of its inoffensive appearance it was a dangerous focus of subversive elements, and a grave threat to the life of the Republic. It was supported by men like General Sanjurjo, Aunós and Sainz Rodriguez, and a good many others who had been involved in attempts to crush the Republic by means of a military coup.

There is one party of the Right Wing which deserves special mention—that directed publicly by Señor Gil Robles, and in secret by Angel Herrera, director of *El Debate* of Madrid, a most clever and intelligent person who enjoyed the confidence of the Jesuits. I am referring to *Accion Popular*. This party of the big landowning bourgeoisie, of financiers and industrialists, had leanings which can be described perhaps as "Vaticanist". It was not unlike the party of Dollfuss in Austria. Its motto was, "Spain before everything, and God over Spain."

Its essential propositions coincided with those of the Traditionalists. But Popular Action (whose chief, Gil Robles, had once said: "Let the miracle be performed though the devil perform it"), in spite of having worked on the monarchist side in the elections of April, 1931, had said later that it would respect the Republic, though it had never actually declared itself republican. Realising that the new regime had a firm hold on almost all social classes of the country, Popular Action seems to have decided that instead of fighting it from the outside, it would introduce itself into it, take the sting out of it, domesticate it, and so by the most discreet methods finally root up its life.

Popular Action also succeeded in imposing its politics on other parties of less importance, among which the only one worth mentioning is the Agrarian, over which Señor Martinez de Velasco presided. This grew enormously during the first years of the republican regime, not so much by its own good luck as by the mistakes of others. Forces which were completely monarchist willingly lived almost outside the law in order to carry on their subversive activities, and their small nucleus in the government, debating in a sea of contradictions, induced among the richer classes such fears for their capital that the latter were impelled to seek a political refuge for it.

This refuge for egotists, for non-combatants, could only be Popular Action itself. This party therefore attracted the most heterogeneous collection of people, and in a little



more than two years its own politics, and the circumstances then created in public life, made it a force capable of administering power.

In order to get itself into the Government of the Republic, Popular Action needed someone to open the door. Don Niceto Alcala-Zamora was President of the Republic, and it would be very difficult to explain why. Before the proclamation of the new regime he had said in a speech in Valencia that he could only be counted on to constitute the Republic with bishops and the Civil Guard. While the constitution was being drawn up he expressed his opposition to everything that tended to reduce the privileges of the Church, which till then had had the state under her thumb. And although it was impossible for him to prevent that in the text of the constitution certain articles were included which he said were repugnant to his conscience as a Catholic, he afterwards took on presidential responsibilities and swore to respect the constitution.

Don Niceto Alcala-Zamora was chief of the Progressive Party, which was of small importance, made in his likeness and image—a personal party. It was very democratic, but always considered the suggestions of its chief as orders. This party was destined to have a very short life, because it was born for the purpose of transition, and bore in itself all the economic and social contradictions of the time. Alcala-Zamora had to keep up diplomatic relations with the Papal Nuncio in Madrid, and he made these most friendly. The Nuncio was Monsignor

Tedeschini, a most intelligent and sagacious man, who had a remarkable and perhaps decisive influence on the political tendencies of the time.

But Alcala-Zamora, owing to the unimportance of his party, and above all owing to his personal honesty, could not be used as a means to gain their ends by those who wanted to secure power in the new state. So that Señor Gil Robles got into contact with the Radical Party, directed by Señor Lerroux. Such a man with such a party was a disgrace to Spain. Lerroux had made himself known many years before, when he had blinded the reason and roused the hatred of the workers of Catalonia. He had the fiery language of a revolutionary, who knew what violence could be inspired by the spirit of destruction. He had a catastrophic political sense, and the mental coarsenesses which go with despair resounded in his speeches. On one occasion he wrote that "convents should be entered and sacked, so that nuns may be raised to the category of mothers."

This demagogue, creator of the Radical Party, and of a fighting organisation called the *Young Barbarians*, whose exploits consisted of attacking processions with stones or shots. Once his influence had risen among the masses he used that influence to the bourgeoisie of Barcelona, and with the secret support of the latter, as well as with the votes of the former, he obtained the title of "Emperador del Paralelo,"\* a popular hero. That title

\* One might say 'Emperor of Limehouse'. The Paralelo is the principal proletarian street of Barcelona.

indicated that he was the foremost figure of the Catalan proletariat, the most advanced of all Spain.

The leadership of Lerroux' party was in the hands of a group of ignorant political charlatans, anxious to get rich in government positions, even if it meant prostituting themselves in the most ignominious manner. There were more gamblers among them than politicians, and this barefaced crowd sheltered themselves behind the title of Traditional Republicans.

Lerroux was Minister of State during the first republican government. The post was of great importance, but the fact that he held it does not mean that he had the confidence of his fellow cabinet ministers, or of the various parties. He disliked the obvious suspicion with which he was treated, but since he could carry on his political business and put his numerous satellites in well-paid posts, he maintained a certain pride, an air of satisfaction. It was then that he put in use a word which acquired a picaresque meaning, "*Euforia*". For Lerroux "*Euforia*" was not a state of physiological satisfaction, of bodily plenitude, but the ignorant complacency of the scamp, who has the good luck to see his swindles turning out well.

Gil Robles took advantage of the moral atmosphere of the Radical Party to introduce himself into the Republic and follow his designs.

The *Lliga Regionalista Catalana* (The Catalan Regionalist League) presided over by Don Francisco Cambo, a financier and statistician, was an enterprise to



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defend the business of the capitalists of Catalonia, sometimes against the workers, sometimes against the government forces of Madrid. "Monarchy or Republic, what does it matter?" Señor Cambo once asked, and this indifference characterised the whole programme of the Lliga. If outwardly it held a certain ecclesiastical allegiance like Popular Action, it was only to be perceived in certain agricultural areas of Catalonia where Stock Exchange prices were not studied.

I will say nothing about the Conservative and Liberal-Democratic parties because they were minute, and never influenced the development of Spanish politics.

These may be taken as the political parties which formed, with the Falange (which I will deal with later) the block of forces charged with the defence of Capital.

### 4

I go on to the political parties of the bourgeoisie and of the workers, also of the Syndicalist organisations which made up the Labour Front. When the administrative immoralities of the Radical Party began to be evident, and Señor Lerroux made his alliance with Gil Robles, Señor Martinez Barrio opposed this betrayal of the Republic and separated himself from the Radicals with many of their leaders. He thus started a new party with the title of The Republican Union. This party was very

moderate Left-Wing and never achieved very great proportions, a common defect among Spanish Republican parties, due perhaps to the fact that the Republic, founded half a century too late, had from its earliest days the misfortune to be unable to sustain in the reduced framework of its new proportions the enormous social reality of an uneducated proletariat, but a proletariat of great sagacity, which lived on the verge of despair.

Don Manuel Azaña constituted a democratic party which secured some importance in governmental circles. This party was called *Izquierda Republicana*—Left-Wing Republican. It was of the people from top to bottom. It nearly always attacked demagoguery, it was distinguished by its honesty in public administration, and its followers gained enthusiasm from reading the books of Señor Azaña, going to see one of his lengthy comedies, or listening to poems recited in his honour by the actress Margarita Xirgu.

The "*Ezquerria Republicana de Catalunya*" (the Left-Wing Republican party of Catalonia) influenced events which affected the whole country. This party was created by ex-Colonel Francisco Macia, with a nucleus of Separatists. He formed it while he was in exile, under the title of "*Estát Catalá*," and at that time he built up relationships with other parties, which later, by the pact of San Sebastian, were to be bases for the formation of the Republic. Macia claimed autonomy for Catalonia, but afterwards this could only be given him in half measure by those who had promised it to him, the compensation being

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that his party should be represented in the government of Madrid. Consequently Catalanian Separatism, represented by Macia, was the same as when it was directed by Cambo, a latent threat, and a subject for speculation both economically and politically, so far as the central power of Madrid was concerned.

In this party, the "*Ezquerria Republicana de Catalunya*," all the Liberal and middle-class elements found refuge—small tradesmen, office workers, government employees, trades union officials, intellectuals, lawyers, doctors, etc. Macia, who looked rather like Don Quixote, was unreal and sentimental. Both these characteristics of his were reflected in the propaganda of the *Ezquerria*, but not in his own activities, which were dictated sometimes by the proletariat, and sometimes by the financier bosses of his Lliga. When Macia died, he left vacant both the leadership of the *Ezquerria*, and the presidency of the *Generalidad de Catalonia*. These two posts were filled by Señor Companys, but this meant no real change in their policies, unless it was a certain small pretence of national feeling, and consequently more cordial relationships between Barcelona and Madrid.

As for the Basque Nationalist Party, I will simply say that it was in reality clerical and reactionary, but attached itself to the Left Wing, since this gave it its only hope of working out its Nationalist programme.

I go on to the political parties of the proletariat, but with one reservation. In all these forces there was a very remarkable disproportion between their social activities

and their political ambitions, the former being much more intense and decisive than the latter. There were two Workers' Parties, and two Syndicalist organisations.

The Socialist Party was founded half a century ago, and it developed under the Marxist leadership of its founder, Pablo Iglesias, who started with a struggle against the Republican Parties of that period, and afterwards established a long collaboration with them, a collaboration which produced a certain moderate tone, by means of which, during the difficult years of the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, Iglesias was enabled to act in various state organisations, especially in those which governed the relationships between workers and employers, without forgetting his revolutionary aims. This allowed him to continue his struggle within the law without betraying his own tradition. A proof of this was that the Socialist Party played an important part in the proclamation of the Republic.

And once the Republic was established this party took an active part in the administration from the very first, working with other republican parties both of the Right and Left. It was the only party of the masses which the republican and democratic bourgeoisie could support. The U.G.T. also supported it, as will be seen later.

No other political force had so many personalities among its leaders. It included men who had had their training in the proletarian struggle in Parliament, in Press circles, at the University, and nearly all these men, among whom

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were Largo Caballero, Prieto and Besteiro, were respected by their political opponents for their solid worth and sense of honour.

This is sufficient to explain why, from the first moment, there was a Socialist majority in nearly all the important organisms of the new State, but it also unfortunately explains why within the party itself there were groups of followers round each of the most important figures, and these only too often at variance. And when there were events in the country which upset the strongest convictions these discordances were accentuated.

The Spanish Workers' Socialist Party was revolutionary, but the mentality of its leaders never let it take part in real proletarian insurrections. It vacillated always within the limits of Social democracy, and was shaken from time to time by violent internal disturbances which belonged more to its Spanish temperament than to its Marxist practices. Its organisation was a normal one, its followers and leaders were in close touch; it was methodical and responsible.

The other workers' party was the Communist, attached to the Third International. Before and after the proclamation of the Republic, the Communist Party in Spain was of no importance, ridiculous in its slogans and despicable for its conduct. According to its usual tactics, while raising the banner of Unity it caused a split in the Socialist Party and another in the Youth Organisation of that Party, and these splits meant its own foundation, because in order to develop it had to organise itself in the



same way as other proletarian entities. From the year 1921 it collected the most heterogeneous elements—well-intentioned workers, whose imaginations had been impressed by the Russian revolution, militant politicians, discontented with their party or organisation and stirred by personal ambition, intellectuals of bourgeois origin rejected by their own class, and so on. These people could not understand the talk of “*celulas*”, “*Troikas*”, “*radios*” and the other details of Bolshevik organisation which were quite out of keeping with the Spanish character. The intellectuals who had created the party spent a long time explaining the Russian revolution to everyone, preaching Marxism right and left, and fighting other workers’ parties in the country, sometimes with truth to support them, sometimes lies. They took care to upset their opponents, setting leaders and followers against one another.

But their fighting fervour died out a little when they saw that their Party developed very slowly, that it was very difficult for it to struggle in an atmosphere of spiritual honesty, and that the teachings which they received from Moscow showed that the proletarian revolution was being destroyed by Stalin, so that they were obliged to contradict their own statements in public, at the risk of being laughed at. Little by little such men as Andrade, Gorkin, Andres Nin began to leave the Party, and years later formed the United Marxist Workers’ Party (The P.O.U.M.). Some of these suffered prison or death by the orders of the Communist Party during the civil war.

Others, seeing their ambitions growing remote, returned

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to their own parties and took with them many honest workers, disillusioned from Bolshevik propaganda which could scarcely conceal its intention of using the energy and scope of the workers of other countries for the furtherance of the Russian dictatorship, and was guilty of political acts only compatible with its repugnant belief that the end justifies the means. The Communist Party, already breaking up, and losing what prestige it had, then fell into the hands of a few quite uncultured men who were motivated by resentments and ambitions. The Political Bureau of the Third International expelled these leaders of the Spanish section from the Bolshevik ranks.

Then, and then only, José Diaz, La Pasionaria, Vicente Uribe, Jesus Hernandez and other leaders, began to be something in the Communist Party, men whose names have resounded throughout Spain and beyond her frontiers during the War. I can state, quite definitely, that the Communist Party until the year 1936 had no influence at all, great or small, in any aspect of national life, no strength and no prestige, and this I can prove by the fact that in the parliamentary elections of 1933, it obtained only one seat, and even that was due to the political necessities of other Left Wing parties, up against the reactionaries in Malaga.

In Catalonia there were the United Socialist Party (P.S.U.) and the United Marxist Workers' Party (P.O.U.M.), the last-named being formed of Bolsheviks who were not Stalinites. Both Parties wished to use the regional organisation of the U.G.T. for their political

ends, and this caused them to struggle fiercely between themselves, although they appeared to keep up the most cordial relations.

The Syndicalist Party, extremely small, had no influence in political events. I mention it only to pay tribute to the man who founded it, that great Spaniard, Angel Pestaña.

The Syndicalist organisations have had in Spain as much importance as political parties, and sometimes more. I will pass over the Catholic Syndicates, created under the auspices of the Church to oppose the revolutionaries, since they never were very considerable, except in certain provinces like Burgos and Santander, and never had much fighting spirit. When one speaks of the syndicalist movement in Spain one means a strong revolutionary current which has been the principal factor in the political advance of the country for the past forty years and has given conclusive proof of the people's extraordinary vitality.

We will notice two great syndicalist organisations—the National Confederation of Labour (C.N.T.) and the General Union of Workers (U.G.T.). Both have the same origin—the Spanish section of the First International. The ideological differences between Marx and Bakunin have a close parallel in the struggle between Pablo Iglesias and Anselmo Lorenzo, the two first leaders of the Spanish proletariat, which they served with a spirit of self-sacrifice and with real generosity.

Pablo Iglesias, after the separation of Marx and

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Bakunin, left Anselmo Lorenzo and created the General Union of Workers, outside the margin of the first proletarian group to have been organised. It was fairly moderate Marxist. Anselmo Lorenzo, remained faithful to the libertarian and even anarchistic doctrines of his first period of struggle. However, Pablo Iglesias managed to organise the workers better and more quickly and on a wider plan than Lorenzo, perhaps because he gave a pragmatic tone to his Marxist propaganda and applied it prudently to economic realities, whilst his rival anarchist remained always an idealist, propounded things which the worker found impossible or too remote to realise, however much he might wish for them.

The U.G.T. is fifty years old. The tendencies represented by the C.N.T. are older, but this central syndicate had no concrete existence until the year 1910 and its formation was not finished until 1919, from which date it began a struggle, apparently without leadership, but actually ruled in secret, and directed against the bourgeoisie, the political parties, the Church, the Army and the State. Meanwhile the U.G.T. in a more practical way worked up economic strikes. Often the workers of the two parties worked together in the same syndicalist movements. This occurred in Barcelona in 1909, in nearly all Spain during the strike of 1917, and in Asturias during the insurrection of October 1934.

The C.N.T. can be defined as a Socialist Syndicalist organisation, so far as its programme in economics is concerned, while in its political aspirations it remains

anarchistic. It fought to found Libertarian Communism by means of the industrialist syndicates, a communism completely different in structure from the capitalism of the Bolshevik State. It used the tactics of direct action, by means of which professional and proletarian organisations could oppose everything which it did not support, from political parties to the State itself.

The U.G.T. is a Syndicalist organisation of Socialist tendencies. It proclaimed the conquest of Authority not so that the syndicates might administer that authority, but so that the workers' parties might exercise a dictatorship over the proletariat.

The fundamental differences between the C.N.T. and U.G.T., except as to the ideology of their respective leaders, was a temperamental one. What distinguished the C.N.T. from the ordinary was its impulsiveness, its violent passion, and its Spanish fervour.

The U.G.T. was slower in decision, planted its feet more firmly in reality, counted the consequences of everything it did, and consequently, worked with less waste. Before the War began, the C.N.T. had approximately a million members and the U.G.T. a million and a half. The headquarters of each of them were perfectly well organised, functioned regularly and had rationalised their political and social aims and their means of obtaining them, thanks to the experience they had acquired in the Republican era, during which all that had been attempted within the limits of democracy had failed rapidly under syndicalist pressure, and opinions and interests had grown

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poles apart into extreme capitalism and extreme proletarianism.

The U.G.T. had to accept its direction from the Socialist Party in which it was born, and since it suffered the same consequences as that party it moved according to the decisions of the Socialist leaders.

The C.N.T. on the other hand, struggling against all parties, opposed to universal suffrage, never trusted anybody, which does not mean to say that it had not been influenced by the F.A.I. (the Spanish Anarchist Federation, of which I have not yet spoken).

The Spanish Anarchist Federation was not really a party, if by that we mean a political group which wants to assist in the governing of the country. It was Anti-State, opposed by its own tradition to all forms of government, since none exists without the principle of Authority, against which it fights, as its name implies. Sufficient to understand that, to know what obliged the F.A.I. to live so long in hiding. It was not, and could not be a popular organisation among the masses; it had aims which were so difficult to realise, and such risky tactics, that few men could fight in its ranks for long. For many years it was persecuted with blood and fire and defended itself with these same means, so that in the proletarian regions where it had its secret influence it created an extraordinary atmosphere, in which terrible fears and fiery illusions were mixed.

Spanish Anarchists, differing from those of other countries, have dropped individualism, and it would be a

mistake to imagine them with a knife between their teeth and a bomb in each hand, or as a crowd of Bohemian charlatans. They are, before everything else, workers, with an extraordinary capacity for self-sacrifice, and a strong sense of organisation. They influenced the proletarian crowds of the C.N.T., not as political elements imposed upon them, but as ruling members of the same party. Their influence consisted in making it impossible that the organised proletariat should have to submit to any political clique, and in fighting for their independence as producers.

## 5

Having explained the principal features of the various political and social forces which held the destinies of Spain in their hands, I should like to point out the process which formed them into fighting Units.

The Republic was founded in an atmosphere of cordiality, and at the same time, indifference, which has no precedent in history. The generosity of the Spanish people made it possible to pass from the Monarchist to the Republican regime, without any blood being spilt in the process of changing. Spain, although late, had founded its second Republic without pain, and this fact, which would seem flattering, in reality presaged misfortune and calamity.

It would be prolix as well as unnecessary to relate in

detail all that happened in the period between the foundation of the Republic and the Nationalist Rising of July 1936. I will only point out two unhappy events: that parody of a military rising in August 1932, and the revolutionary movement of October 1934. The first was extraordinarily important, because it revealed only too plainly the lack of authority and political vision of the Government, and showed the enemies of the Republic that they could undermine it without risking their lives. The second, of very doubtful efficacy, made the Right Wing zealous of organising a basic attack.

As a matter of fact, as a result of the revolution of October 1934, the Right Wing became very closely united. Popular Action, monarchists and traditionalists, with the help of the Radical Party, worked enthusiastically to make a frontal attack on the Republic, whilst the republican leaders spent such precious time in the niggling work of party politics. The Right Wing followers found it very easy to consolidate their position, mainly for the following reason: there was an aristocracy in Spain, chiefly of military origin, in which there were plenty of people whose family crests went back to the end of the Middle Ages, or the beginning of the Modern Age. With these armorial bearings families continued to hand on from generation to generation ancient feudal estates, that is to say the lands distributed by each King among the nobles who had helped him in his conquest. The families of Alba, Osuna, Medinaceli, Lerma, Veragua, Ayllon, etc., had fabulous wealth, and immense estates on which



bulls for bull-fighting or stags for hunting could take their ease on land which thousands of country people, without any land at all, needed to cultivate, in order not to die of hunger. They were educated abroad, they lived little in Spain and so knew nothing of the sufferings of the people with whom they had no contact. Their immense properties were generally administered by unscrupulous men, whose behaviour aroused in the peasant a silent but deep hatred towards aristocrats, on whom he could not depend for any policy which would help towards the betterment of conditions for the masses.

The great middle-class financiers were few in numbers, and nearly all of them developed their business through foreign initiative, that is to say they used a Spanish mask for foreign companies which took the mercury of Almaden, the pyrites of Rio Tinto, the potassium of Suria, the coal of Asturias and the iron of Vizcaya, etc., or else they exploited our electric supply, our telephone service and even our oranges and olives. This financier class was grouped in small sections, forming the Boards of a dozen businesses, and using its influence on the nation in a secret way, by means of its economic domination of governmental resources.

Relatively less than this went another class of less economic power, with a spirit of saving and hoarding but not of enterprise. It was incapable of understanding the organisation of great capitalist exploitations, either in the agricultural, commercial or industrial fields. It was very stupid, completely uneducated and with a sort of village

egotism, but each of its members generally had his little field of influence in which he extorted from, rather than oppressed, the workers. These men lived pretty well. There were not many who had motor-cars, and very few of them who took a bath. Their grandfathers saved up their gold pieces in a stocking, or under a stone. They accumulated paper money in strong boxes and could never decide whether or not to take it to the bank, suspicious of being robbed there by a failure or suspension of payment.

The Church was more important than the aristocracy, and nearly as important as the bourgeoisie. The number of ecclesiastical properties in Spain was astonishing and contrasted notably with the wretched life of the poor village priests and the members of many religious communities. Catholic influence, assured by economic interest, made itself strongly felt in the whole of national life, from the Prime Ministry down to the prisons, from the highest to the lowest stratum of society, and in some provinces, as in Navarra, Gerona, Santander and Burgos, it was almost impossible to avoid its domination, a domination by fervent fanatics, through which a man could be tacitly condemned to unemployment if he read Liberal newspapers.

The bureaucratic organisation of the State is worth a separate paragraph. If one compares the great plans of this with the meagre economic development of the country, one can understand those who conclude that the State, contrary to the opinion of many sociologists, was

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not a means by which one class could dominate another, not a judge whose duty was to decide between them, but was itself the most powerful class in the country, every day better organised to subject others, even though it were by means of the armed forces it controlled. Its economic situation was not very easy. The Spanish State was not able to pay many of its employees decently, and for that reason they all had to play in the political lottery and were open to corruption. Public administration, even in the sanctuary of the Law Courts, had an unfortunate taint of bribery and corruption.

But, undoubtedly, of all the State organisms, the Army was the one which had the most decisive influence on the course of political and social events in Spain. As the strong arm of the Nation it had, fundamentally, the high duty of defending the country's independence, and safeguarding the liberties of her citizens; but one must recognise that the Spanish army has only too often failed in the mission which the people have entrusted to it. It has served as an instrument of force which has overridden the fundamental law of the State and of legitimately constituted authority, and has served all sorts of interests. In the last century and up to the present in this century, the subversive behaviour of the Army has shown history some wretched pages of military rebellions, most of which were against the will of the Spanish people, since their object was to prevent the natural process of the people's political and social development.

The causes which have prompted the Army to deviate from its duty so often are various, but among them the most important is the special psychology of its commanders. Unfortunately in Spain the men who had done the greatest service to their country were never found in the high ranks of the Army, nor were those who had first-class technical ability. On the contrary, the highest positions were given to those who followed the profession of arms through ambition, or privilege, or both. These men who had quite easily, and by sometimes using shameful methods, managed to reach the top, were ready to offer themselves to the highest bidder, if he could offer them scope for the satisfaction of their boundless ambitions.

This would not have been sufficient to cause these military risings, if subalterns with a high sense of duty had opposed that sort of thing. But the officer's ranks of the Spanish Army have special features which I must indicate. Until twenty years ago, a great number of aristocrats and landowners entered them and from patriotic motives considered it an honour to follow the career of arms, renouncing the comforts which their position could have given them, and voluntarily accepting the sacrifices and dangers which the career provided. But in exchange they gave the Army a stamp of caste, which removed its sympathies from the people and set it in opposition to them.

Lately, the aristocracy as well as the bourgeoisie left the Army, a little influenced perhaps by the materialism of

this century. In recent years the majority of commanders and officers of the Spanish Army have been extremely poor, modest people who secured a decent means of life, but economically a miserable one, because their wretched salaries did not allow them to satisfy their most simple needs. Some of them came from the Military Academies, others from the ranks, and they were generally slow at study. The better-educated ones used their knowledge in the narrow limits of their professional specialities. They were never subject to political disquiet nor to the vivid and bloody reality of the social drama. Every now and again they received some attention from those in power when the latter needed them to defend their class interests, which were often opposed to the national interests, and on that account, and solely on that account, the people viewed the army with suspicion, because in their minds it represented the chief strength of their enemies.

These were the fundamental causes of all the military risings, but as I have said, they were nearly always against the sovereign will of the people. One could count on the fingers of one hand the military revolts of the last and present centuries the object of which was to overthrow an illegal Government or to satisfy public opinion. It is curious to note, while we are speaking of the Army, the role played in relation to this, and to Spain, by our protectorate of Morocco, the occupation of which took so long and was so calamitous, and caused a despairing nation to be divided in its opinions for and against the political and military leaders of the campaign,

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and so for and against the monarchy as an effective power.

### 6

To get a rough idea of the course of events which took my country into the struggle which has broken it up, it would be best to make a short summary of the parliamentary events of the years 1935 and 1936, also the ministerial crises which were so frequent and difficult to solve.

As commander of the President's escort, I lived through these things very intensely.

The incompatibility of the Right Wing members with the Left in Parliament had appeared very plainly and it had become impossible for them to work together. Parliament was completely sterile, could produce nothing that was any good.

In the month of September 1935, the fall of the Coalition Government (a widening in the base of the Republic, or more precisely, a crack in the base of the Republic), put the ex-Minister of the Crown, Señor Chapaprieta, into power. His Government died without glory, a natural death, in the first fortnight of the month of December. After difficult child-birth the Portela-Valladares Government was born with the definite mission of dissolving Parliament. The members of this Government were not actually representative of the parties so much as of the

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President, who probably had the idea of organising a great balance party which would wield the baton in the future Cortes.

At the same time a military rebellion was being prepared with its leaders in the Central General Staff of the Army. To secure forces, the leaders of this projected rebellion created the U.M.E. (the Spanish Military Union), an organisation made up of Generals, Officers and N.C.O.s, retired and on active service. A negotiator was appointed in each of the General Staffs of the Army's divisions, and it was their principal task to make out lists in which appeared not only the members of the U.M.E., but also of the U.M.R.A. (the Republican Anti-Fascist Union), whose membership was much smaller than that of the first.

With their keen intuitions the masses of the workers realised the danger they were running and put pressure on their leaders, who decided at last to form the Popular Front, as a bloqe determined to prevent the schemes of the Republic's enemies.

The constitution of the Popular Front was made public on the 15th January, 1936, in a manifesto signed by the Republican Left Party, the Republican Union, the Socialists, the Syndicalists, the Communists and the Youth Movements of the Socialists and the U.G.T.

The pact between these indicated a programme of moderate ambitions which were quite constitutional, and outside all forms of demogogy. It made cordiality and co-operation possible, but it came too late. The Right Wing

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followers did not wish that a programme should be put into practice which would give life to the Spanish Republic and its fundamentally democratic Law.

On the 16th of February, parliamentary elections were held. The President of the Republic took up his residence in the National Palace. He made prophecies about the results of the election, and he liked to know the opinion of all of us who surrounded him. Predictions used to coincide with his wishes, since unfortunately the majority believed in the triumph of the Right Wing.

The voting gave the following results:

Centre and Right Wing:	205 Deputies	43.35 %
Left Wing:	268 „	56.65 %

These elections, carried out absolutely legally, contrasted remarkably with the last elections in the year 1933, which were also quite sincere and the results of which were as follows:

Centre and Right Wing:	352 Deputies	74.41 %
Left Wing:	121 „	25.59 %

It is evident that the 147 Acts of Parliament which had been passed by the Left Wing Members in 1935 were a fine testimony to the actions of those moderate governments who had ruled the destinies of Spain during that time.

On the 19th of February, the complete victory of the Left Wing was known. There was no cheerfulness in the palace, rather a certain depression or disillusionment.



That morning I was with the General Secretary of the Presidency, Don Rafael Sanchez Guerra, in the President's ante-chamber, when the Prime Minister, Señor Portela-Valladares arrived, in a pitiable state of mind. At that moment, when he should have given an impression of being calm and busy, the Prime Minister was completely demoralised. He told Señor Sanchez Guerra that he urgently wished to be received by the President, to hand in his resignation, and that this would be quite irrevocable. Señor Sanchez Guerra, with his habitual frankness, told the Prime Minister that his attitude could cause serious trouble, and that it would seem no more than logical for him to remain at the head of the Government until he had fulfilled the elementary duty of presenting himself before the new Parliament. Señor Portela-Valladares said nothing. A few minutes later he had his meeting with the President and the crisis had begun.

I have often wondered what reasons Señor Portela-Valladares could have had for adopting such a cowardly attitude, and more so since he was a man, according to those who knew him, with nothing timid in his character. I have come to the conclusion that he behaved in this way because he had heard rumours of a *coup d'etat* by the Army and he didn't want to be mixed up in that sort of thing. I deduced this not just by conjecture but because of a conversation which I had that same day with General Batet, officer in command of the President's Military Headquarters. The General, for whom I had a great regard, called me to his office and after exchanging a few words of

courtesy, enquired: "What attitude would you take up if Don Niceto was in danger?"

"General," I replied, "it is quite obvious. I should do my duty."

"Just so," he said, "but that is very abstract. I should like you to put it more concretely."

"Very well then. Concretely I tell you that my life and the lives of the forces under me are bound to defend the life of the President. But I should like to add that I do not command the escort of Don Niceto Alcala-Zamora, but that of the Head of the State. Personally, if I felt enough regard for him, I could sacrifice myself for Don Niceto Alcala-Zamora, but not my forces, which are not a praetorian guard."

Knowing the great sagacity of General Batet, I could understand where his question led, and I was convinced that there were to be attempts at a military seizure of power. There was, in fact, an effort to bring it about, but whether through lack of preparation, whether because the people were ready, or whether because it was thought premature, all that happened was the arrest of a few commanders and officers; very few when one realises how many were mixed up in this abortive rebellion.

As a result of the crisis, Señor Azaña, head of the Republican Left Party, who had been responsible for forming the Popular Front, was now entrusted with the task of forming a Government. He took office with the best intentions, and realising how much needed to be done to remove hatred, and bring back normality

into public and political life, he made the following statement:

"The Government of the Republic addresses all Spanish citizens with words of peace, using the prerogative of the legitimate authority of the Nation, constituted by the will of the public in the recent elections. The Government hopes that the whole Nation will assist their purposes of pacification, of the re-establishment of Justice, of Liberty, of respect for the Constitution and of the republican spirit which it has had since it was founded. The Government of the Republic is convinced that all Spaniards, whatever their political ideas, now that the ardours of the electoral contest are over (quite legitimate whilst they lasted, but which should be forgotten when the contest ceases), will now co-operate in the work which the Government will now try to undertake, acting on its own responsibility.

"On that account, we hope that those who have helped us to reinstate a republican policy will be our first collaborators, keeping within the Law, not disturbing public peace nor spoiling our victory by impatience in seeking the things which we all desire.

"The Government adds that it has no designs of persecution or vengeance. With the responsibility of power, there can be no rancours. There will be no persecution by the Government whilst everybody obeys the Law. We only recognise as enemies the enemies of the Republic and of Spain, and we need not persecute anybody who keeps within the rights which our constitution

gives to all. Only he who violates the Law, who is not at peace with the Law and with the authorities, need fear the severity of the Government, which in no circumstances will itself depart from what its duties demand.

"Our slogan is 'Defence of the Republic, the Republic restored, and as a consequence, prosperity, liberty and justice in Spain.' We all unite under this banner, which can include Republicans and non-Republicans, and everybody who loves his country, and respects discipline and constituted authority."

This call to cordiality and co-operation unfortunately did no good, and what is more, actually had the opposite effect, since it excited the jealous impatience of the Right Wing.

As if this was not enough, differences between the President and his responsible Government became public and notorious. This incompatibility, so unjustifiable in these serious circumstances, brought as a result the removal of the President. How did this come about? Let us listen to Señor Martinez Barrio, at that time President of Congress:

"It was not strange that the debate on the dissolution of Parliament should take place in an atmosphere of suspicion. The Right Wing and the extreme Left Wing had taken up during the electoral campaign their respective attitudes with regard to the problems set by the President of the Republic in his Decree of Convocation. Both political forces believed that the dissolution of

the Cabinet was the second to be made by this President, so that his constitutional faculties were ended by this fact.

But the result of the elections changed the picture. The elected cabinet had a strong Left Wing majority and there could be nothing more mortifying for the defeated parties than that this cabinet should be sure of a long life, or at least a life as long as the time between its constitution and the end of the President's period in office.

Moreover, since the unfriendliness of Señor Alcala Zamora to the Popular Front Government was well-known, it did not suit them to take away his power of issuing another decree of dissolution. The Right Wing adapted its part in the debate to this political opinion, and with more or less disguise, accepted the Presidential thesis that the dissolution of the *Cortes Constituyentes* should not be considered as one of those two dissolutions authorised for the President by the constitution.

Such a change of principles awoke the suspicion of the Popular Front parties and decided them to make a declaration to the contrary. That is to say, to state that with the dissolution of the last Cortes, the President of the Republic had used his prerogative twice.

The voting of the Cabinet accepted this doctrine by a great majority and I had to carry out the procedure indicated in these cases by Article 81 of the Constitution.

This article says: "*The President of the Republic can convoke an extraordinary Congress if he considers it necessary. He can suspend the ordinary sessions of Congress in each form of legislature by one month in the first period, and fifteen days in the*

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second, as long as he does not fail to fulfil what is laid down in Article 58. The President can dissolve the Cortes twice as a maximum through his period in office, subject to the following conditions:

(a) *By Decree carried.*

(b) *Accompanying the Decree of Dissolution with the announcement of new elections within 60 days.*

*If there should be a second dissolution, the first act of the new Cortes will be to examine the necessity for the Decree of Dissolution of the last Cortes. An unfavourable vote by a clear majority of the Cortes shall mean the President's end of office."*

The Cabinet's resolution produced another problem—that of deciding whether the dissolution had been necessary or not. To open this question I proceeded to carry out what was ordained in the second part of Article 106 of Congress Rules: "*As a necessary guarantee, the matter must only be dealt with if it is announced with three days' notice, a general citation of members and notice given of the time at which the debate will begin.*" My duty was clear, and I did it. On Friday, the 3rd of April, the Cabinet agreed to declare that the dissolution of the last Cortes was the second of those which the President could make, and it called the meeting arranged in Article 106 for Tuesday, 7th. In the exercise of this right, the Cortes were going to confront the First Magistrate of the Nation.

On the following day serious news about the attitude of the President of the Republic began to circulate through Madrid. Some said that he had a message of resignation ready and others that, believing that the Cabinet's

decision to be null and void, he had no intention of accepting it. But the most general opinion was that he meant to dissolve Parliament, making use of the right which he still believed he possessed and which the Cortes denied to him.

All these rumours, reaching me by different sources, preoccupied me very much. I decided to "interrogate the sphinx" and advise him that he should be reconciled to the Government and submit to Parliament. He gave me an audience and I went to the Palace. I did not know that this would be the last time we should meet and that forty-eight hours later, by the exigencies of a duty which I could not decline, I should be occupying his place.

I put the problem before Señor Alcala-Zamora in a few words. I told him that I thought the Cabinet decision was perfectly legal and constitutional and that the good of the country and the peace of the Republic demanded complete accordance on his part. He did not object in any way, but nor did he express any agreement with my thesis. The only thing I could see in his attitude was a wish that the interview should be ended.

That theme being finished, I took the conversation on to other equally slippery ground, that of his relations with the Government. "It is not possible," I told him, "that the President and the responsible Government should remain in open opposition. All public men resented his antagonism and impartial opinion saw a cause of restlessness in these differences, while the Government's enemies found in them arguments for their campaigns. No regime could

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outlive internal disruption, more so when it lacked the strength of a long tradition."

The President reacted violently. "Do you think," he said, "that I am to blame for these conditions?" "That is not the point," I replied, "the problem is another one. From my point of view it doesn't matter whether you or the Government is right. The danger is a rupture within itself, more so when the Government has the absolute confidence of the cabinet and is carrying on a political programme, supported by the votes of the people, which obliges everybody, the Minister who develops it and the President of the Republic, to follow laws which have been constitutionally voted."

Señor Alcala-Zamora made a gesture, and with another pleasant gesture of good-bye he walked away, and I went towards the door. I deduced more from his attitude than from his words that my attempt had failed. I was leaving there in the Palace, not an impartial arbitrator above all parties, but an impetuous fighter who, not knowing how to untie the knot, meant suicidally to cut it.

Pessimistic rumours were more frequent on the morning of the 7th of April. They ran through the streets and as usual began to reach the garrisons. At four o'clock in the afternoon when I arrived at Congress the Government told me that it would be declared by a majority that the dissolution of the last Cortes had not had sufficient motive, thus agreeing on the dismissal of the President of the Republic. A few hours later, after a dramatic debate, the Cortes dismissed Señor Alcala-Zamora by 238 votes to 10.



This act of the Cabinet has been much discussed since then. Was it legal? Evidently, because nothing required by the Constitution or the Rules of Congress was omitted. Was it morally justifiable? Yes. From the moment in which the President allowed an attitude of rebellion against the resolution of parliament to enter, which deprived him of the right to dissolve the Cortes another time. Thus the Republicans of the Left, the Basque and Catalanian nationalists, the Socialists and Communists understood, and on that account they voted for his dismissal.

By implication, all the parties of the opposition who abstained from voting, estimated the matter in the same way. Only ten Deputies supported the President with their confidence. Small remains of that enthusiastic vote which, five years before, had raised him to the leadership of the Republic."

## 7

I shall not discuss whether the dismissal of Señor Alcala-Zamora was legal or not. What I do think is that it was inopportune and harmful. From the moment in which Don Manuel Azaña was made First Magistrate of the Nation, the Right Wing precipitated events.

Señor Azaña charged Señor Casares Quiroga with the duty of forming a Government, a Government which on its presentation to the Cabinet received a vote of

confidence. When Señor Casares Quiroga took office it was too late to keep politics within the limits of peace or prevent the subversive movement by using discreet and timid means which only gave an appearance of impotence. On the other hand there was plenty of time to prepare everybody, absolutely everybody, and to prevent by more stringent means a movement about which the Government knew perfectly well, having facts to support their knowledge.

Why did it not do something? For one of two reasons. Either because it lacked the necessary decisiveness, or because it had a mistaken idea about the magnitude and significance of the movement, thinking it, perhaps, no more than that parody of a military rebellion in August 1932.

But unfortunately the dispute was to be far greater, and became, as we know, completely international. Two powers had chosen Spain as a field in which to satisfy their ambitions—Germany and Russia.

Germany, in order to develop her imperialist plans, thought it necessary to weaken the strategic positions of England and France, and for that reason turned towards Spain and towards the Balearics, which constituted in effect the outposts of the British Empire and France. The conquest of Spain, her submission as a protected nation, or simply her control, obviously meant a re-strengthening for Germany of a kind which would put the balance of power in Europe in her hands, and with which she would have the necessary weapon to keep up her constant

threats against the great democratic powers and satisfy her imperialist hopes.

On her part, Russia needed to undermine as much as possible the whole social framework of Europe.

To carry out their respective plans they went about the matter with great astuteness, and, themselves remaining in the shadows, they organised in Spain the two forces which were to be their respective fighting units.

In the month of February 1936, the Fascist and Communist factions were insignificant, as may be seen in the elections of that date, since there was one member of the Falange and only seventeen of the Communist Party.

The victory of the Left Wing in the Parliamentary elections had scarcely been made known, when the Falange and the Communists began to be heard everywhere and there was a note of accusation in their shouts. Thus they put themselves in the advance guard of those who were going to make up the two fighting forces. Germany and Russia had taken over their leadership for the tragedy which they were preparing.

It was then that the ranks of the Falange and the Communist parties began to grow greater. The Falange attracted many army officers, discontented members of other parties, students, aristocrats, and a good many criminals and people of bad character. From the first moment the Falange received a good deal of sympathy and could count on the unconditional loyalty of the reactionaries and the Army, because they saw in it a safeguard of their interests when faced by the Communist

revolutionary movement which they believed was imminent.

At the same time the Communist Party, showing great activity, reinforced its meagre membership and raised itself as the spear-head of the struggle against Fascism.

A series of personal attacks produced the dangerous climax which made the clash inevitable. On the 13th of July a Lieutenant of the Assault Guard, Señor Castillo, was shot dead. He was a fervent republican. That same night, Señor Calvo Sotelo, leader of the Spanish Renaissance, was assassinated. The ingenuous Spanish people had swallowed the bait. Germany and Russia could now carry them on to their common objective, the final clash.

From the moment in which the fighting began, the Falange on the Nationalist side and the Communist Party on the Republican side kept their privileged positions. They did so because they were the representatives of the totalitarian regimes whose doctrines, procedure and mission were the same. Their doctrine was the destruction of all spiritual values; their procedure, calumny and terror; their mission to make man into a mere unit, and to drown the civilisation of the West in blood.

Fascism, like Communism, could take root in Spain, because of the behaviour of its Governments under the Monarchy and the Republic. The first because it would not recognise the troubles of the people and made Laws always to benefit Capitalism. The second because it lacked the authority to call to order the reactionary forces, and treated the most absurd demagogic practices

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with the greatest tolerance. In such conditions, Russia and Germany found in Spain a field abandoned to their designs, so that it could happen that what had begun by being no more than a military revolt became a civil war, and with foreign help was converted into the most cynical and cruel war of invasion which history has to show.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT THE PEOPLE DID NOT KNOW

#### I

WHEN Franco's rebellion broke out on the 18th of July 1936, the people reacted in an astonishing manner. All the political parties and the syndicalist organisations of the Popular Front began to recruit volunteers to repel the aggression. They did not need to use artifice or propaganda for this, because the masses, both of workmen and peasants, came out in their thousands and very promptly, to enrol in the different Units of the Militia. Groups and Battalions of Militiamen were formed rapidly, and this was the basis of the People's Republican Army.

It was natural in the circumstances that these units of militiamen were formed with a certain political significance, a significance which afterwards characterised the People's Army. It was quite logical that both political parties and syndicalist organisations should have shown a keen spirit of Anti-Fascism. But as we shall see later a mixture and clash of political elements soon began to make themselves felt in a way which later prejudiced the whole army's effectiveness. Moreover, the occasion for

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which the People's Army was formed made it necessary that its internal organisation should be characterised by a democratic spirit. It is self-evident that an army which is democratic in this sense, cannot have the rigid discipline necessary for its fighting purpose.

And now, looking back on the events of the War, one can see certain things emphasised—the tenacity of the Spanish people in resisting with true heroism a powerful enemy army, with all the help it got from Germany and Italy; the spirit of self-sacrifice of the civil population, whose morale, right up to the fall of Catalonia, remained very high, in spite of the unfavourable course of the war; the great sense of responsibility which was shown in our final surrender. These things make us believe that the Nationalists will not secure the fruits of a military victory, nor the totalitarians of a political one. Even now, it is difficult to decide if the war from the political and social point of view has been useful or prejudicial to the Spanish people, but racially their triumph is beyond discussion, and has given the most eloquent proof of their great potentialities.

In the organisation of our armed forces we stumbled on one difficulty among others which seemed insuperable. I mean the commanding officers. There were plenty of professional soldiers who remained in the republican zone at the outbreak of the rising, but the hideous position in which the Government was placed, as well as its lack of energetic action, put them in a most difficult situation.

It must be understood that when the Republic had first

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been formed the leaders of the political parties and the syndicalist organisations had a completely wrong idea of professional soldiers. They did not realise that the great majority of these managed to live as decently as possible, in spite of the miserable salaries they were paid. Generally speaking they were neither Monarchists nor Republicans. They lived outside the great political and social problems of the world and of Spain. They only wanted to better their own conditions, and receive from the people the consideration they believed they deserved.

With the idea of attracting them to Republicanism, Señor Azaña, Republican Minister of War, passed a law concerning retired officers, which had no precedent in all history, either for its generosity or for the great blunder which was implicit in it. By this Law the Republican Government made a public declaration that it did not wish to oblige army officers to give their professional services to the new regime, that those who wished loyally to serve the Republic could stay, and that the others, who did not feel themselves fitted to do so, should be retired. As a result a great number of the generals and lesser officers voluntarily accepted pensions, a few because of their monarchist tendencies, but the majority for more selfish reasons, since the law was stupid enough to allow them a pension for life which was equal to the salary they would receive on active service. Nothing was demanded from them in exchange for this generous provision. When these officers entered civil life they did so in search of advancement, choosing activities for which they felt them-



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selves fitted by their experience and faculties. This was obviously damaging to those in civil life with whom they competed.

At the same time, the Left Wing Press never lost an opportunity of criticising army officers, without realising that by so doing it provoked them into seeking contact with the forces of Capitalism and Reaction. In this way that parody of a military rising was produced in August 1932. The Republican Government did not punish it with enough severity. This might have been considered generous, but was interpreted as a sign of weakness, and from that moment the Right Wing intensified its activities with the idea of securing support from army officers. This was most clearly seen in the guards organisations\* and in military clubs, where we, who had Republican convictions, were treated as though we were on the very edge of the Law. The Government knew all this and did nothing to counteract it, nor ever tried by intelligent means to attract the loyalty of army officers.

When the rebellion broke out two organisations came into being, much to the misfortune of the Republic. These were the Barracks Committees and the Office of Information and Control. The first of these, the Barracks Committees, were formed by men from the ranks, as lacking in merit as soldiers as they were overburdened with impudence and ignorance. They took it upon themselves to say whether they were pleased or displeased with the

\* The Assault Guard and Civil Guard, which were police forces organised on military lines. (Translator.)

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command of the officers of their unit, and took advantage of this magnificent chance to revenge themselves on those who had done their duty by punishing their faults. The information sent out by these Committees was passed to the Office of Information and Control, whose Chief was a Captain Diaz Tendero, an unintelligent and ambitious man, who indulged to the full his dislike of professional soldiers. In consequence, and owing to the inexplicable weakness of the Government, the Office of Information and Control acted over the heads of authority. Its sentences could not be appealed against. This fatal organisation lost to the People's Army the efficient service of many professionals whose offers to help were refused, and who, in many cases, were imprisoned or assassinated.

This sort of thing of course made the problem of finding officers an even more acute one, especially since we naturally lacked military instruction schools for the training of new officers. But if this was taking place in the armed units, something else, just as bad, was happening among the General Staffs.

### 2

During the first days of the struggle, in spite of the self-sacrificing efforts of the parties and syndicates, and of their militant followers, the enemy found his plan of conquest working out easily, although we ought to recognise that he lacked decisiveness. Our soldiers, almost

without any military leadership, could only put up what resistance their small means allowed.

In the second fortnight of September 1936, there made their appearance at the Ministry of War certain Generals and Chiefs of the Soviet Army who were supposed to be "Military technicians" and were known as "friendly advisers". I held the office then of Operations Chief to the General Staff of the War Ministry and by order of my superiors I entered into relationship with them. From that day onwards light arms began to arrive, and I noticed that these were not given out in equal quantities, but that there was a marked preference for the units which made up the so-called Fifth Regiment, a name which perhaps might better be translated as the hive of Communism. The fighting members of other parties and syndicates were anxiously begging for arms without getting them, so that I realised the danger of this preference for the Communists, and on more than one occasion I informed the High Command that this preferential treatment would inevitably cause jealousy and suspicion among the men, and what was more would soon bring about the accession of the Communist Party to power.

This party, observing what my opinion was, with the underhandedness which characterised it, started a campaign of discredit against me and convinced the Minister of War that I was not the most suitable person to fill the office of Operations Chief because I had the faults of violence and pessimism.

I am not surprised that Señor Largo Caballero allowed himself to be convinced, because he did not know me and, moreover, it is not very pleasant for public men in serious situations to be faced with such information about the course of events through the excessive sincerity of those in charge. Thus the campaign of the Communist Party, and the loyal way in which I gave my information to the Ministry, combined to bring about my dismissal.

Ceasing to be Operations Chief to the General Staff of the War Ministry, I was chosen for the organisation of the first Mixed Brigades of the People's Army. One Russian General and two Russian Colonels were chosen to help me in this mission by order of the Minister, and I accepted their collaboration, although with a firm decision not to admit coercion nor any weakening of my authority in carrying out my duty. We worked together without their giving me the slightest trouble and I was able to confirm the estimate, which I had already formed, of their very limited technical ability. They certainly realised that so far as military tactics in Spain were concerned they had much to learn and very little to teach.

As time went on, Russian influence was increased at the War Ministry. They looked over the plans of the General Staff and through the Minister they rejected many technical proposals and imposed others. Generally speaking, all the proposals of the "friendly advisers" were opposed by the Ministry's General Staff, but very often their advice prevailed. Their suggestions nearly always had a political objective. In army organisation they tried

to impose a system of Unit Commands. In Information, they put out propaganda of a party nature, and in Operations they turned down good reasons for certain tactics and strategies, in order to put the Communist stamp on them.

When the Republican Government decided to turn the Militia into a Regular Army, it began organising six mixed Brigades and two International Brigades in Albacete. Of the eight Brigade Commands, five were given to militant Communists. The first Brigade to Lister, the Third to José Maria Galán, the Sixth to Gallo, the Twelfth International to General Lukach, the Thirteenth International to General Gomez. That is to say that more than sixty per cent of the Commands of the first units of the People's Army were given to the Communist Party. This was following the political tactics of the party, and complying with the demands of U.S.S.R., either with the consent of the War Minister, or without his realising the manoeuvre.

This percentage of Commands in the People's Army was held by the Communist Party throughout the whole campaign and even rose higher during the last months, when it reached the exorbitant figure of seventy per cent. There were many protests and complaints from other political parties and syndicates, but without any result, since later on the Communist Party had in its service both the Minister of National Defence, and the sub-Secretary of the Army. I have often thought that this excess of Communist Commands may have influenced France,

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Great Britain and the United States to abandon us, as they did. It is beyond doubt that these facts came to the knowledge of the Governments of these three countries, and gave the impression that Republican Spain was at the mercy of this party.

These "friendly advisers" exercised authority just as much in the Air Force, and in the Tank Corps. I can state clearly that during the whole war neither the Air Force nor the Tank Corps was controlled by the Minister of National Defence, nor in consequence by the Central General Staff. The Minister and his Staff were not even aware of the quantity and types of their machines and only knew the situation of those which were used in actual operations. In the same way the Minister and his Staff were not aware of the situation, and even of the existence, of a great number of unknown "flying fields" (aerodromes) maintained in secret by the "friendly advisers" and certain of the Aviation Chiefs who were entirely in their confidence.

On one occasion as Temporary Chief of the Central General Staff I had to give information on the general situation before the Higher Council of War, at which were present Largo Caballero, Prime Minister and Minister of War, Indalecio Prieto, Minister of Marine and Air Minister, and Garcia Oliver, Minister of Justice. Among other things I told them that I thought the moment had come in which the Air Force, as well as the Tank Corps, should be under the absolute authority of the General Staff, in the first place in order to be in accord-

ance with regulations, and in the second place because the General Staff needed to know what aeroplanes and tanks it had at its disposal, so that it could advise the Ministry on the adequate use of these. Since they were supporting forces in attack as much as in defence, they ought to be used by the General responsible, and not by the "friendly advisers", who worked secretly, exempt from all responsibility. Señor Prieto considered my regrets very reasonable, and Largo Caballero and Garcia Oliver were of the same opinion. But in spite of their good intentions things went on in just the same way.

On one of the various occasions on which I have discussed the matter with the "friendly advisers", one of them told me quite ingenuously that they controlled the Air Force and the Tanks, though he could give me no reasons for this, except that in his judgment it was a question of politics. Possibly their idea was that the Communists should hold such important forces in their hands so that if the opportune or necessary moment arrived, they could attack authority. (What happened at the end of the war confirms my belief.)

When I was in command of the Andalusian Army I had to form a plan of defence, owing to the possibility of a strong attack from the enemy. I naturally needed to know the situation of all the aerodromes in the territory under my command. The Andalusian General Staff had no concrete facts in this most important matter. Consequently, I asked the Army General Staff to send them to me privately.

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I received a reply by telephone, in which I was told that the situation of the unknown "flying fields" could not be given to me because it was secret. I replied that it was unheard-of that an army commander should know nothing of what was within his theatre of operations, and explained that such a state of things lowered the prestige of a Command, and undermined its authority. On the following day, the Commander of the Aerial Base of Andalusia presented himself to me by order of the Chief of the Air Force, and gave me extra-official information with respect to the situation of these unknown "flying fields". But with what funds were these "flying fields" constructed, if they had no official justification? With what object? And why was their existence hidden, even from the Minister of War?

This sort of thing made me extremely indignant, for I found it humiliating. When I was talking alone one day with a "friendly adviser" who was very understanding and a better type than most of his fellows, I told him that if the Operations Chief did not send me a detailed list of material in Aviation and Tanks, I had decided to make his position difficult. This "friendly adviser" who, as I say, was very understanding, in twenty-four hours produced a detailed list of all these materials, but it was private, without a seal, a date or a signature, and he begged me that I would not show it to anybody, because not even the Minister knew it.

I can affirm that in all the operations in which I took part as an Army Commander, in order to find out any-



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thing about what aeroplanes and tanks were at my disposition, or how they could be tactically used, I always had to enter into direct relations with the "friendly advisers" and only sometimes with the Spanish Chiefs of Aviation and Tanks. Frequently during the carrying on of war operations in order to have the support of aircraft we had to change our time-table for one which they imposed, often with lamentable results.

### 3

In the first month of war a new organisation was created—The Commissariat of Army, Navy and Air. Its root was Sovietic, and its end Communist. The first General Commissar of the People's Army was Señor Alvarez del Vayo. This choice confirmed the whole conception. Del Vayo was just the man needed to stamp this office with Sovietic doctrines and procedure, and to secure as many militant communists as possible in the ranks of the Commissariat. He achieved both these quickly and without great difficulty. The Commissariat was scarcely formed before it had started very active propaganda in the ranks of the Army, by arrangement with the directions which it received from the General Commissar. These directions could be summarised as intense proselytising work in the ranks, the persecution of anyone not affiliated to the party (secret and lying information being accepted as sufficient grounds for this);

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the actual elimination of those considered dangerous, for which monstrous responsibility the justification could be used that such persons had been killed for trying to go over to the enemy or for being traitors.

The functions and powers of Commissars were not strictly fixed by law. They called themselves the "Political High Command," and except on rare occasions they impeded, undermined, and even annulled the military High Command.

There were plenty of Commissars of good faith who gave their lives in the holocaust of patriotism and liberty, dying at the head of their Units, and there were others who worked honourably for the highest motives. For these, my greatest respect. But, undoubtedly, the mistaken activities of the Commissariat contributed notably to the adverse course of the war.

Such things naturally aroused hatred and suspicion among men who were fighting for the same cause. Political differences were increased, and passions rose high. However much one wished to do, it was all useless. The plan consistently followed by the Communists to get command of the People's Army was stifling all chance of using that army.

It is interesting to notice that at the same time on the General Staffs one noticed a feeling of disdain towards the "friendly advisers", disdain which at the end of the war changed to the most profound contempt, making the Staffs refuse to take notice of the hints which the High Command gave them about their treatment of the Russian

advisers. The latter realising what was happening, managed to make their visits to the General Staffs less frequent. I would like to add that, after the fall of Catalonia, the "friendly advisers" were totally prohibited from everything to do with military operations, though they did not cease to function in other activities.

4

In the organisation of the People's Army, the greatest error was committed when the Spanish High Command accepted the advice of the Russian advisers with respect to the organisation of the tactical units.

As a principle in the formation of the Mixed Brigades, an exotic organism was introduced which might be called the "little great unit". This type of tactical and administrative Unit does not exist in any regular army, for the simple reason that its composition is absurd; four battalions, one squadron of Cavalry, one Anti-Tank Battery, one Company of Hospital and Health Service, one Company of Communications, one Company of Sappers and Miners, one Company of Supplies, one Munitions Section, one Motor Section, one Anti-Gas Group and one Company of Reinforcements. It comprised 3,700 men; its armaments consisted of 1,960 rifles, 32 machine-gun rifles and 24 machine-guns. Naturally, at the end of the war, the Central Army, for example, had 250,000 men, and only

95,000 rifles, 3,000 Automatics and 65 Batteries. Moreover, as I have said, the mixed Brigades had 4 Battalions and the Spanish tactical regulations as laid down for the Republican Army were made on the basis of Regiments of three Battalions. I remember as an effect that when the People's Army had approximately 1,000,000 men, it had only 350,000 rifles and 8,000 machine-guns. These figures show only too plainly that the organisation of the unfortunately celebrated Mixed Brigades absorbed an enormous number of men who had no means of fighting, robbing them of their tactical mobility without increasing their firing power. This waste of men meant mobilising a great number of reinforcements which meant in turn an alarming reduction of hands in all work behind the lines. It was not possible to practise the fundamental principle of the economy of forces.

When we had approximately 200 Mixed Brigades, a suggestion was made to the High Command that it was more than advisable, it was indispensable, to give to the Army a divisionary organisation of a regimental kind. This would have permitted greater tactical and strategic mobility, the same firing power and a saving of more than 150,000 men. These could have served to make up new units if, as we were told, new armaments would arrive, also to constitute reinforcement units, thus avoiding the mobilisation of new reinforcements, whose calling-up was unnecessary and harmful, not only because it meant taking away indispensable men from work behind the lines, but also for the effect on morale of conscripting

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boys of seventeen and eighteen years, and men of more than thirty-five.

It seemed logical that this proposal would have been accepted if it had been considered by the Central General Staff. But in spite of the fact that if it had been put into force it would have been of great benefit from military, political and economic points of view, and without any kind of disadvantage, the High Command decided not to accept the proposed reorganisation, because of its "friendly advisers", who were the creators of the Mixed Brigades.

The lamentable consequences of this imposition were shown unmistakably after the fall of Barcelona, when the Minister committed the lunacy of decreeing the general mobilisation of all reinforcements from sixteen to forty-five years old, a mobilisation which had to be carried out in a very short time. The civil population was greatly alarmed and great was the surprise of the Military Commanders who understood the material and moral damage which would be done by this, and among them, the most important, the collapse of all activities behind the lines. Therefore it was considered wise to obey these mobilisation orders very slowly. This delay was also understood by all the Political and Syndicalist Parties, except by the Communist Party, which, wishing to make itself important by every possible means, started a very active campaign to bring about the mobilisation as quickly as possible, censuring the parsimony of the military Commanders in its Press. Its slogans were "Everybody to the Front. There is

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nobody irreplaceable behind the lines. Let the women replace men in the fields, factories, workshops and offices, and wherever there is need." They confused the situation by recruiting thousands and thousands of women, militant members of their party, with visions of the Communist *coup d'état* which they were preparing.

As was natural, they came up against the greatest opposition from the other Parties, especially from the Syndicalists who realised the intended manœuvre and were determined to prevent it. Besides, the army commanders were opposed to such a brainless plan.

### 5

During the whole war there was no coherent plan of campaign. The only ones who might have achieved it were the officers and senior officers of the General Staff, who had been through the Higher Military School, and who had remained loyal to the Republican Army, but unfortunately a foreign influence prevented it. I refer to the activities of the Russian technical advisers.

It would take too long to enumerate all the plans of operations suggested, and even imposed, by these "friendly advisers" which were a complete failure. Nor is it possible in this book to quote all the projects of the Republican Army's General Staff which were never carried out because of the obstinate opposition of the Russians, but which would have had great chances of

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success. I will content myself with quoting three cases of this.

In the month of January 1937, I held the post of Operations Chief to the General Staff of the War Ministry, to which I had been re-promoted by the Minister, probably convinced of his mistake in dismissing me in October 1936. By the Minister's orders I went to Madrid to fulfil various important missions and among them to try and re-establish cordiality between two Generals—General Pozas, Chief of the Central Army, and General Miaja, Chief of the Madrid Army Corps. The differences between these two Generals, which were fundamentally childish, were reflected in their General Staffs, with obvious damage to the progress of the war. As a result of his defence of Madrid in 1936 General Miaja had been hailed as a great military figure by people and Press alike. His senior officer, General Pozas, viewed General Miaja's behaviour with displeasure, either from temperament or from jealousy, or both. General Miaja, perhaps because of the admiration and affection which the people felt for him, frequently forgot the obedience he owed, and ran the risk of appearing to be trying to put himself in command. I lived with the two Generals for a whole month, trying to convince General Pozas that he should take no notice of General Miaja's behaviour, while as for the latter, I managed to apply a cold douche to lower the fever which he had caught from the people, the Press, and above all, the clique which surrounded him, and which had brought him to a state of actual danger. More than once he told

me that the popular enthusiasm had reached such a pitch that women even kissed him in the streets. I permitted myself to tell him that right through the ages it has been a custom to fatten pigs before they are killed. The General, with that sly good-humour which characterised him, realised the meaning of my words, and I think that at heart he was glad of my sincerity. When he was on his habitual rounds at Headquarters he used to make irreverent remarks about his superior, General Pozas, and I managed to convince him of the danger of making public their disagreement. I sincerely believe that what I did had some result, but it was not enough to make the two General Staffs work together in perfect harmony.

When I was carrying out this mission among others in the last days of January, I received from the War Ministry a plan of projected operations, so that I should study the ground to see what possibilities there were of using it. A single reading was sufficient to make me realise that the project had not come from the brain of the Operations Section of the General Staff. On the contrary, it had an obvious Sovietic stamp. The details are not interesting, but it was to do with a plan of offensive in the Jarama region, with the idea of breaking the enemy front in the Valdemoro-Sesaña Line. (The enemy's right flank to the south of Madrid.) The only forces that could be spared for the realisation of this plan were eight Mixed Brigades, recently formed, who had only just finished their training, and were not sufficiently armed and equipped. Artillery that could be spared to take part in the operation was very



scarce. After reconnoitring on the ground, in view of what I found I gave to my superior officers a written opposition to the plan. Among others of minor importance I wrote the following reasons:

- (i) On the front chosen for the attack the enemy occupies very strong and well-fortified positions.
- (ii) The Mixed Brigades, with which it is proposed to make the advance, are not ready for effective action, and still less against positions such as the enemy hold.
- (iii) To have the least hope of success, we should need forces three times stronger than those suggested, and the support of a great mass of Tanks and Artillery, in such quantities as would give us a chance of breaking the enemy front.
- (iv) For this and other reasons which need not be explained, I believe that the plan should be abandoned. If it is adopted I am convinced that it will mean useless waste of a great number of lives, and a certainty that the enemy will retort with a greater offensive. This, in my judgment, would be a strong one.
- (v) Also, it must be remembered that, according to information which I have received from the Central Army, the enemy is making great concentrations behind the lines which it is proposed to attack, and at the same time on the Guadalajara Front. My personal impression is that the enemy means to make a strong offensive on both, in the hope of cutting

communications between Madrid and Levante and Mediodia.

- (vi) I therefore venture to suggest to the High Command that it should drop this projected offensive, and that it should speed up the concentration of suitable forces at points between Tajo and Tajuna, in the hope of holding the next enemy advance.

Two days after I had sent this counter-proposal to my Superiors, the War Minister and the Chief of General Staff, General Martinez Cabrera, came from Valencia to Madrid. The latter, in our first interview, told me of the displeasure which my disapproval of the plan had given both him and the Minister, and without saying it directly, General Cabrera gave me to understand that he didn't believe in the enemy concentrations to which I referred. Two days later, when the Minister and the Chief of Staff were dining in Alcala de Henares, I was obliged to give them the bad news that the enemy had started a violent offensive, occupying La Marañosa, San Martin de la Vega and Ciempozuelos, afterwards crossing the River Jarama and conquering important heights on its left bank. The news fell like a bomb, and naturally they both left the dinner-table. The Minister, pressed by Government necessities, returned to Valencia, and the Chief of General Staff, who had taken up his quarters with me at the General Staff of the Central Army, also left Alcala some hours later in the direction of the beautiful capital of the Levante.

## WHAT THE PEOPLE DID NOT KNOW

The War Minister was obliged by his own sense of honour and responsibility to suffer this sort of influence from the Soviet and from the Communist Party, because he was trying to avoid a clash with them, believing that this would do even greater harm. During the whole campaign the Communists took advantage of this sense of responsibility in other Parties and Syndicates to carry on their fatal work, work which did such damage to our cause in the war.

In these particular operations, for instance, something happened which went beyond the limits of the greatest sense of responsibility. When the enemy began his offensive, the Commander of the Central Army, General Pozas, ordered the Chief of the Madrid Army Corps, General Miaja, to send reinforcements to check the enemy's advance. General Miaja told the command that he could not send reinforcements, for he needed what few reserves he had, particularly in view of the situation which confronted his Army Corps. Of course the situation was a desperate one, and I had to make a quick and drastic decision. My proposal was that the Chief of the General Staff of the War Ministry should suggest to the Minister the urgent necessity of allowing General Miaja to relieve General Pozas, so that when he had taken command of the Army, whatever happened in the offensive would be his responsibility. Within a few hours General Pozas was relieved, and on the following day the Madrid Army Corps sent reinforcements of no less than five Brigades, which meant that the enemy advance was instantly checked. This

saved the situation, but it also satisfied the Communists' ambition to get command of the Central Army.

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In the actual war operations the Spanish tacticians believed in remaining on the defensive, trying to wear down the enemy and waste his resources, while at the same time doing all that was possible for the perfection and organisation of their own territory, forming staffs of officers, drawing up reserves, believing always that the quantity and quality of the latter are the principal factors in a decisive battle. They only believed in strategic advances which would not cost too many lives, and which, if they were successful, might change the whole course of the campaign.

The creation of strategic reserves was very difficult, because the enemy, always on the offensive, made us use what small reserves we had before they could be properly trained. Moreover, sometimes at the suggestion of the Russian technicians, and sometimes through their insistence, we attempted offensives at Brunete, Teruel and Aragon. The result of these, as we could foresee, was to confirm our impotence and waste our meagre reserves. On the other hand, the Russians flatly opposed the only plan of offensive which could have been realised with a real chance of success, since it would have been made

against an enemy front which was watched, rather than defended. It happened like this.

In the last days of the month of February 1937, by order of my superior command, I went from Valencia to the Extremeña region to study better methods of defence on that Front. A few days later I received secret instructions from the Chief of the General Staff of the Ministry to work out a plan for a double offensive there, the chief object of which would have been the capture of Merida, combined with a secondary action in the Tajo region, above Oropesa. This would have been of extraordinary strategic value, and if it were successful, and we could have continued to advance towards Badajoz, it would have put the enemy in a difficult situation, since the Andalucian Army of the Nationalists would have been isolated from the rest of Rebel Spain. Moreover, our action would have obliged the enemy to hold up his victorious advance in the north, where our situation was very serious, since this region had been isolated and we could not reinforce our army there with men or materials. I studied the general situation, and was convinced that this was the only really important operation which could change things in favour of the Republican Army. I spent nearly a month in working out this plan, and when I had finished I went to Madrid to study on the spot the quality of the reserve Brigades of the Central Army which, to the number of seven, would take part in the action.

With all the information I needed to know, I went to Valencia to inform my superior officers. Obeying

instructions already received, I maintained absolute secrecy and did not even tell General Miaja what the Supreme Command thought of doing. A few days after my arrival at Valencia, I received from the General Staff of the Ministry a written document from the Chief of the Central Army, in which he showed concretely that he thought it a good moment to carry out an attack on Brunete and Navalcarnero, with the object of diverting the enemy's offensive from the North of Spain and at the same time satisfying the hope, felt strongly by officers and men, that we should take the offensive. This report had been sent for my information. As Operations Chief I replied that this was a purely tactical operation which could not be carried out, that even supposing it were successful, it would not succeed in attracting the enemy forces from the North, and it would in any case be expensive in lives, without achieving any fundamental objective.

The High Command approved my plan for capturing Merida, and consequently orders were given for the concentration of 75,000 men. All preparations were made and services established. It was then only necessary to bring up seven Brigades of the Central Army and the Air Force. The Central Army was given orders that these Brigades should proceed to the concentration point in Extremadura. A few hours later, a telegram was received from the Commander of the Central Army in which he explained that the enemy had concentrated 100,000 men on the Guadalajara Front. This information was received

with some reserve by the General Staff of the Ministry, and the Central Army was ordered to explain, as quickly as possible, the source of information from which it had gained such important news. On the following day it appeared that the news had been given by a few deserters, but that it had now been proved that it was false.

It was realised, of course, that the Central Army was simply trying to resist the order of the Supreme Command to send the necessary forces, but in view of the fact that the information referring to enemy concentrations at Guadalajara had now been denied, the order to the Central Army that the seven Brigades mentioned should proceed to Extremadura was repeated. But on the following morning an Army Corps Commander of the Central Army arrived at Valencia, and without the knowledge of the General Staff, gave the War Minister a message from General Miaja, in which that General's advice on our action was clearly stated. Such procedure is a crime of Military sedition, perfectly defined in the Castrense Code. But the War Minister once more wishing to avoid trouble during operations, after a sharp reply to the officer who had brought this message contented himself with turning the man out of his office. The document, it would seem, in a tone which was outwardly respectful but at the same time impertinent, expressed the wish of the Commander of the Central Army to carry out the action against Brunete and Navalcarnero, the plans for which had already been rejected by the General Staff of the Ministry. At the same time it expressed regret that the

Minister had not informed him of the projected action against Merida, as if the Minister was under an obligation to inform his subordinates of what he was intending to do outside their territory. On the other hand, the Central Army, without any previous authority from the Minister, had just made its unfortunately celebrated attack on Garabitas, which had cost more than 5,000 lives and was a complete disaster.

By return of post the Minister replied to this document, rejecting for the second time the proposal of an offensive against Brunete, giving strong technical reasons and explaining the importance of the projected operation against Merida. The letter finished by telling the Commander of the Central Army that he must get concrete information about the *actual* position of the enemy in front of his Army and inform the Minister whether he considered it wise to use the seven Brigades on the Extramadura Front.

On the following day the Commander of the Central Army realised that after the orders he had received he must proceed at once to move the forces under his command to the positions assigned to them. But during the afternoon of the same day a General, a "friendly adviser", came to my office telling me that no aircraft could take part in the action against Merida, because it was needed on other fronts. For several days past I had realised the possibility that the Communists were trying to hold up this action, and after listening to the "friendly adviser" I was convinced that it could not be carried out. I simply



told him that it was not his duty to give me this disagreeable information, that it was a matter exclusively for the Spanish Chief of the Air Force. He smiled, and called the office of the Air Force Command, so that they should inform me on this point. They replied in writing, stating in a somewhat ambiguous way that I could not count on having the aircraft which I had anticipated. I immediately went to the War Ministry and told the Minister what had happened, convinced that a Governmental crisis was imminent. Actually on the following day Largo Caballero's Cabinet resigned and another was formed under Dr. Negrin.

The Communist Party had scored a political success, although to do so it had had to use its whole influence to prevent the action against Merida, which would have undoubtedly been a triumph for the Republican Army. They had succeeded in bringing down Señor Largo Caballero, who would not reconcile himself to their audacities, and they had put Dr. Negrin in his place, for the latter was well suited to assist the development of their political and military programme.

As a matter of fact in the first days of July the offensive against Brunete which had been twice forbidden by the General Staff began. Its result was completely negative. There were 15,000 dead, and the defence lines were straightened, which put them in a much more tentative position than before, so that from then until the end of the war it was necessary to use twice as much infantry and artillery in their defence.

It is worth mentioning as a very curious fact that one of the Army Corps, commanded during the advance by Colonel Jurado, remained with no officer in command, on account of this man's illness. I happened to be in Valencia on the morning after the reported casualty of Colonel Jurado and I received orders to go to Madrid at once, where I should get instructions from the War Minister, Señor Prieto. I arrived in Madrid at nine o'clock at night, wondering why I had been summoned, since at that time I was Inspector General of Cavalry and Director of the General Staff School, and so outside the scope of the action which was proceeding. On my arrival I presented myself to the Minister, and we arranged that on the following morning he should give me my instructions on the mission which I had to fulfil. An hour later the Chief of General Staff ordered me to take charge of the 18th Army Corps.

I told him that I did not know the composition of that Army Corps, its situation, the morale of its troops, or indeed anything about it, and if it had to go into action the following day it would do so without my making previous reconnoitre of the territory. He told me that he understood the difficulties of my task, but that I must go immediately to headquarters where they would give the facts of the situation, which according to him were pretty unfavourable.

At two o'clock in the morning I arrived at what was from that moment to be my Headquarters, and when I asked the Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel

Ruiz-Fornell, how things were, he told me that two Brigades were completely demoralised and a good many troops were simply returning from the Front; that in five days of the offensive our forces were completely spent, for they had had nothing but cold rations and had been mown down by intensive fire from enemy aviation and artillery. The Army Corps which I was to command was composed of four Divisions, and I was surprised to hear that I could only count on fourteen pieces of artillery. Three-quarters of our materials had gone to be repaired. In such circumstances I was ordered to continue the offensive. I informed the Command of the uselessness of this, but the order stood. The men's condition was such that although I was able to re-establish discipline and raise their morale, all attempts to lead them in attack were useless. One Brigade, the 13th International, left the Front. It had asked to be relieved because of its extraordinary state of exhaustion, but this had been refused. I should like to mention as a very significant fact that I was given command of these forces in the full knowledge that I had made written opposition to the action in which they were engaged, and that I had no confidence in its success. On this, as on other occasions throughout the campaign, the Communist clique sought means of giving me commands in which I could only fail. Fortunately, luck was with me, and they were not successful.

I may as well point out here, what tactics the Communist Party usually followed in their relationships with the Commanders of the People's Army. They treated as

subordinates those commanders who were affiliated to their party, demanding simply that their orders should be carried out in whatever way best served their Party ends, often in contradiction to their duty as soldiers. These officers generally obeyed blindly, paying more attention to the orders of the Party than to those of the Military High Command.

Other commanders on many occasions opposed their plans and rejected suggestions which sounded more like orders, or refused to take part in activities which would not have left them with a clear conscience. They pretended to show the greatest consideration to these, but only for a short time, and in a wholly superficial way. They asked them to dine, they told them of the great admiration they had for them, for their intelligence or bravery. In a word, they attempted to stir their private ambitions, but when they were convinced that it was not possible to captivate them by such means, they started an insidious campaign of libel against them, so that the High Command was obliged to relieve them. More than one commander lost his life or his freedom through simply doing his duty.

This sounds pretty strong, but it is the simple truth. I consider that one of the major causes of our defeat was the behaviour of the Communists, and the Russian Technicians, and those Members of the Government, Military Commanders and many others who, through cowardice or ambition, forgot Spain and its magnificent people. Members of the Communist Party put their

been horrified if they had thought how fatally the struggle was to end. One need scarcely add that they were to a man supporters of Negrin's policy of resistance at all costs.

The Propaganda Department, so far from serving the Republic, was one of the organisations which chiefly helped to betray it. Its work was unintelligent and unreliable, and continued outside the bounds of any higher control. The various Propaganda Delegations worked each according to the personal criteria of its chief. The radio programmes, for instance, were open proof that they had no set objective. These lacked all national feeling, and were garnished always with a Russian sauce which Señor Alvarez del Vayo had as often as not deliberately mixed himself.

Although there were countless people employed in this service, it never awakened in the masses any sentiment of national independence, nor could it make them realise that Spain was suffering from the effects of an invasion as humiliating as it was impudent.

It was quite true that since the founding of the Republic scarcely a republican had voiced the old cry of "*Viva España!*" which was once so stirring to us that it could not be repressed, but had to be shouted under any stress or impulse of patriotism. This can be explained. The enemies of the Republic held the belief that they must arrogate to themselves the right to everything that meant a love for Spain, and they understood so little, and were so selfish, that they could not allow patriotic republicans to

take part in these feelings. Republicans showed their patriotism later, with deeds and not with words, by giving their lives, many of them, in defence of a spiritual ideal. But the cry of "*Viva España!*" on the lips of a republican was almost a sacrilege to the minds of the people's enemies, because they believed that the right to such patriotism was theirs, and theirs only, although they abused it so much that it lost all its emotional value.

The Nationalist Movement began with a civil war between Spaniards and Moors, but to make it a bit more "Nationalist" Italians and Germans began to take part in it in a formal way, entering the struggle with "the romantic object of writing heroic pages in totalitarian history," and what had begun by being a Civil War transformed itself into a War of Invasion.

For my own part I never forget what good Spaniards in the Nationalist zone must suffer. For if I found it difficult to endure the interference of foreigners in Republican Spain, what must they feel when they see their country invaded by great units of "technicians," who watch everything, and show their contempt for the Spaniard's sense of patriotism? Their suffering must be acute when they find that, even now that the war is finished, they are subject to a foreign invasion.

Personally I decided to express the patriotism I felt—loudly, for all Spaniards to hear, so that in the very first broadcast speech I made from Madrid in May 1938 I touched the heart of the Spanish rebels and especially of the Army officers by finishing what I had to say with a cry

of "*Viva España!*" But I little knew what effect it would have on the Republican side, chiefly among those who had no idea of its real meaning, and thought it was a reactionary cry. Fortunately it had a great reception in the whole zone, and from that day onwards it became a frequent practice for orators to close their speeches with this most lively expression of patriotism, raising the spirits of the vast majority of listeners, perhaps because they had saved it up for so long, and not because of any lack of feeling or indifference.

It was necessary to arouse a sense of national independence as much on the Republican as on the Nationalist side. If our propaganda had been well directed it could have played an important part in this. It could have worked among the Nationalists by means of the printed word, radio and aviation, and among our own people by appealing to them as Spaniards in all public actions, speeches, wireless programmes, the cinema and theatre. But when instead of reminding the people of figures in history who had done most in our own struggle for independence such as Daoiz, Velarde, Alvarez de Castro, El Empecinado, etc., they were perpetually fed on praise for Stalin, Vorochilov, Jose Diaz, La Pasionaria, etc.; when instead of using the *jota aragonesa* and the magnificent folk songs of Spain, they dished out day after day a whole Russian musical programme, from which the Volga Boat Song was never absent; when on the radio they gave with pitiable frequency programmes by the Red International Assistance Society, the Anti-Fascist Women,

United Socialist Youth, Friends of Soviet Russia, and many other organisations which spoke to us by Russian orders about the Sovietic Paradise; and lastly, when in the cinema, instead of arousing patriotic feeling, they made bare-faced Communist propaganda with films like "*The Sailors of Cronstadt*" and "*The Party Ticket*"; and when all this was done with the approval of the Republican Government, it became practically impossible to arouse any sort of civic sentiment of a patriotic kind.

From this it can be understood that the work done in Spain herself by the Department of Propaganda, was unproductive, but that done abroad was absolutely hopeless. Whilst the enemy was doing everything he could to strengthen and perfect his propagandist apparatus, in our zone it was not possible to organise even the cinematography of War. That is why documentary films appeared in cinemas abroad which gave the impression that the Nationalist Army was perfectly disciplined, equipped and instructed, while so far as the People's Army was concerned the few documentaries shown abroad had been got together by Nationalist agents who were working in our zone, or by foreigners who were sympathetic to them and who took advantage of our good faith and abused our hospitality to make films which emphasised all the defects of our forces and showed none of their splendid qualities.

The Communist Party made a few documentaries which served to advertise abroad people whom I can only describe as gangsters, with the inevitable consequence



## THE LAST DAYS OF MADRID

that a belief grew up in other countries that the Spanish Republic had a completely "Red" army and, what was more, an army out of control. For that reason when important foreigners visited us after the first days of the war they could not hide their surprise at seeing the discipline and self-sacrifice of our brave and suffering soldiers, the iron will of our commanders and officers, the vast work which had been necessary to organise in less than two years an army of 1,500,000 men with more than 40,000 generals and officers, of whom scarcely ten per cent were professional soldiers. Their surprise was no less when they visited the big cities, in which public order was perfect and where the citizens showed a real sense of responsibility, suffering every kind of privation, risk and sacrifice with touching resignation, so that intensive work was going on in factories and workshops to supply the necessities of war as well as possible, though most of the workers were suffering from exhaustion through long periods of hunger. When these foreign observers saw in the course of their travels with what faith and enthusiasm men, women and children offered themselves to work for their country, in spite of the hideous drama which was a background to all their activities, our visitors realised that we were not the "reds" whom they had learned about in their own country, that we were not robbers who were letting loose their criminal instincts, but Spaniards defending their native soil against foreign invasion. It is a pity that the democratic countries did not have more intimate contacts with us, because they would have

understood from first-hand how far the merits of the Spanish people could go, and why they should have come to the help of a magnificent people defending a just cause.

Those organs among the foreign press which had Nationalist sympathies did much to create the impression that we were "Reds," but the democratic foreign press was as much to blame, for it kept up an inexplicable reserve on the subject, and save for one or two honourable exceptions it remained silent on most occasions, in spite of violent attacks by the reactionaries.

As for our own Spanish Republican Press, its work during the war was pretty inefficient, but this was not wholly the fault of the parties and organisations which it represented. No. Its work was ineffective and sometimes harmful because a ruling and intelligent organism did not exist, which might have helped it to influence public opinion. Directions ought to have been given from the office of the Prime Minister, not only on his War Policy, but also about international politics. It is obvious, however, that the Prime Minister could not give what he had not got. And how could the Press be expected to inspire unity for our campaign when there was no real plan, no firm policy of our Government for winning the war? How could the Government give pointers to the Press in the matter of international politics when the Government itself lacked the necessary judgment? In one word, how could it suggest any policy which might have resulted from a little intelligent work and foresight when it

lived in a world of improvisations, without any idea of what would happen next day?

The Party Press functioned in accordance with the orders which it received from its party and the independent Press according to the opinions of its director. Frequently and most anxiously newspaper directors used to ask for advice and directions from the Government, so that they might know how it was best to treat the most important matters of politics, interior and foreign. All such requests were in vain.

The consequences of this were fatal, because the censorship, so far from complying with the law, let all those communiqués which were coloured with anti-Fascism be published in the Press. This was natural enough perhaps, since the civil governors had no proper instructions and could not be too exigent in imposing their personal opinions.

It was natural, too, that the Communist Party, which had been raised into being a ruling factor in the war, should use its press as an instrument for imposing its own opinions. Its license reached such a point that articles and slogans which were printed daily in its press appeared to be instructions to the General Staff. It took it upon itself to give public advice to military commanders, telling them what tactics they should use, going into details of how things ought to be done, and often censuring in a very slick way the work of those commanders who were not disposed to suffer orders or pointed suggestions from the Communists. In their press they ardently defended unity

of command and the greatest possible measure of authority for the commander; stronger discipline was a slogan of theirs and they advised the union of all anti-Fascists to strengthen our resistance. But though they propounded these theories every day in their papers, they were contradicted by the sad reality that the Communist Party in practice did exactly the opposite. Its members did everything they could to coerce commanders into bowing to their wishes. They abused military discipline because it interfered with their political activities in the trenches, where they organised frequent meetings for senior officers, officers, N.C.O.s and privates, often presided over by a soldier, at which critical opinions were given about the conduct of the commanding officers, and it was not rare that an order from superior officers was critically considered to decide whether it would be a good thing to obey it or not. And lastly, they advocated the greatest cordiality between the anti-Fascist forces, but they kept the flames of jealousy constantly alight, and never for a moment ceased to sow discord amongst the syndicalist organisations and the political parties.

Naturally, the rest of the press saw through their political game, and there were frequent and unfortunate newspaper campaigns which led to an inevitable weakening of our cause, wasting, as they did, valuable energy on purely political issues.

But it would be ungrateful not to recognise the magnificent work of our Press in the days of the heroic defence of Madrid, when its protection depended as much on the pen

as on the sword. Or in those black days which followed the closing of communications with Catalonia, or after our loss of Barcelona, when the Press raised the morale of the civil population and of the army in a most intelligent way, without forgetting that there were papers like *El Sindicalista* which lived through the last months of the War, making one prayer to God, and another to the devil.

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This torpid use of niggardly propaganda not only reduced our own fighting strength, but spoilt our chances of help from outside. Just as serious was the harm done by our absolute lack of a Secret Service. What was there to justify the absence of this Service? Lack of understanding? Lack of intelligence? Either of these, or both. The one thing that cannot be argued in excuse is that there was not enough money, since it is well known that throughout the war money was thrown away on all sides without any administrative control, particularly during the period in office of Señor Negrin. The mistake was made in the first place of giving the soldiers a daily wage of ten *pesetas*, apart from food and clothing. This was in the ranks of the People's Army, since in the Assault Guard and in the Carabineers the daily wage of a soldier was fifteen *pesetas*, though there was nothing to justify this increase. Thus during the last period of the War the wages of the troops

alone meant an annual expenditure of more than 600,000,000 *pesetas*. No precedent exists for such extravagance, particularly since, if these wages had been reduced by half, a minimum of a thousand million *pesetas* could have been used for propaganda and espionage, a sum more than sufficient to change the course of the War, and even the opinions of the great Powers, who made such poor use of their Pact of Non-Intervention.

The enemy, on the other hand, had a magnificent Secret Service. It is true that they found it easy to use, and took advantage of our ingenuousness, or, if you like, our generosity.

As a matter of fact, it was known in the Republican zone that some Embassies and Consulates were centres of espionage, and that one or two of them, like that of Turkey, kept quite an important Nationalist staff. This one was formed by Generals Barbero and Mendez Queipo, and was made up of senior officers and officers who had good reputations as tacticians. The number of professional soldiers taking refuge in the Embassies, Legations and Consulates of Madrid, must have been very large. As a point of reference I would point out that a little before the surrender, in spite of the fact that many of them had been exchanged, more than 700 Senior Officers and Officers remained under foreign flags. Their relations and friends came and went in these privileged buildings with complete freedom, so that it was extremely easy to gather magnificent information which was sent to the Nationalists in Diplomatic Bags.

In the same way the leaders of the Falange in Madrid lived normally with the immunity given to them under some foreign flag, so that they were able to organise their forces and maintain close touch with the Falangist leaders in the Nationalist camp. This abuse reached such a point that in some of the diplomatic buildings which enjoyed the benefits of international rights there were wireless transmitters which made it easy to send out promptly any information which could interest the enemy.

The recruiting centres and Military Instruction Centres were also absolute hives of espionage, since they were run by professional soldiers whom the High Command did not appoint to the fighting forces on account of their physical condition, or their small gifts of leadership (frequently more apparent than real), or because politically they did not inspire confidence. These centres soon formed themselves into organisations which were determined to hold up mobilisation and do great service to the enemy. In them were many professional soldiers who seriously harmed the Republic. When they were checking the calling-up of soldiers to the ranks with information from the Medical Tribunals, they marked as "useless recruits" many who in reality had splendid health, but who had Right Wing sympathies, and as "useful," the poor boys of the proletariat, tuberculous or weedy, who ought to have remained outside the service. Moreover, as they had the power to send recruits to whichever service they thought best, they could quite easily arrange a perfect Secret Service system in the general staffs of the great Units, and

at the Staff Headquarters of the Artillery, Communications, Transport, Air Force, Ports and Coast defences.

As if these facilities were not enough, the enemy could count on other means of obtaining information. I am referring to women—office employees, artistes and prostitutes, who, some by their beauty, others by their immorality, used the political guarantee which they needed to carry on their work with absolute impunity. As a crowning proof of what I have just been saying, I will add that the enemy had the facts and figures of the organisation and components of all the great Units of the People's Army, with details of their quantities of arms and material. In one word, the enemy held all the secrets of the Organisation Section of the General Staffs of the Armies.

I could relate many facts which would show to what degree the ingenuousness of our Command reached, but I will only quote one more of real importance, in which may be seen the audacity of the Gestapo.

At that time I held the position of Operations Chief to the General Staff of the War Ministry. I had a most crushing task, chiefly because I had practically no auxiliaries. I certainly had no time to waste on childishness. One day a foreigner came to my office calling himself a Lettish General. He was most correctly and elegantly dressed, and unmistakably a soldier. He had come to visit me on the advice of the War Minister, to make a few suggestions about our actions. He brought me a card from the Minister in which the latter introduced



him, adding that this was a man who could be treated with complete confidence. After exchanging a few courteous phrases, we entered the private Operations Room, where he could clearly see the general position, our own, as well as that of the enemy. He made a few enquiries about the Fronts, and it surprised me that while knowing nothing about the most elementary facts, he should attempt to make suggestions about Operations. As I considered it useless to prolong our conversation and moreover since I had urgent work on hand, I suggested to him that he should master such facts as would enable him to give his advice with some judgment, and I put at his disposal an Officer of the General Staff. We said good-bye until the following day, without my realising that my decision had displeased him. Very early next morning the War Minister called me up to tell me that the General in question had made a complaint to the Foreign Minister, saying that he had not been treated with enough consideration. I told the Minister what had occurred, explaining that it was simply a question of not wasting time which I needed for really urgent matters. The Minister, in a slightly irritable way, informed me that when he gave me an indication of this kind I ought to follow it, even if it was necessary to lose time. I excused myself to the Minister, assuring him that the person he recommended should be treated with every kindness and consideration and would be given all facilities.

That afternoon, the Letonia's General came to see me again, in a very cordial manner. For my part, I showed

him every kind of courtesy. We arranged that an officer of the General Staff should explain the situation to him, and when he understood it, we should exchange impressions. Two days later, he came to my office again, dressed as a general of the Spanish General Staff, with devices and emblems, and wearing the uniform as though quite at ease in it. There was no doubt that he was a soldier. He gave me the impression that such impudence was not the result of a mere caprice, and I began to suspect. When he considered himself sufficiently informed on the general situation, he requested me that before we began our conversation I should give him certain facts which he considered indispensable. At this point I was intuitively convinced that the man was a spy, in spite of the guarantee which had been given him by the Minister of War (to whom he had been presented by the Austrian ex-Minister of War, Deutch, a Socialist).

I told him that I would attend to his wish with the greatest of pleasure, and that in order that it should be done more quickly he should make a list of the questions he wanted to put, and I could then give him the answers rapidly. An hour later, he brought me a questionnaire and mentioned the advisability of suggesting to the Minister that a list should be made of all foreign Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers then serving, with which he could personally deal. This suggestion in itself rather disturbed me, but one glance at his list was sufficient to convince me finally that he was a spy. We parted until the following day. I was about to go down to my car and

bring the whole thing to the knowledge of the War Minister, when a Russian Colonel entered my office in a state of some alarm. He asked me if I knew a foreigner dressed as a Spanish General whom he had just met on the staircase. I told him that the Minister had put him in touch with me, believing him to be an important anti-Fascist, to be treated with complete confidence. The Russian Officer told me that the Minister was suffering under a terrible delusion, and that this was an ex-Captain in the Czar's Army, now in the service of the Gestapo. My suspicions thus confirmed, I hurried to the War Ministry to inform the Minister. I need not describe his surprise when he heard the news. At first he was incredulous, but an analysis of the man's list of questions and the statement of the Russian Colonel soon cleared away his doubts. The Gestapo agent dressed as a General had been given a post in the Operations Section of the Ministry's General Staff. It was only his excessive audacity which took an extremely intelligent secret agent to the Republican prisons. One would have thought that this man would be judged summarily and immediately shot. But nothing of the sort happened.

I should like to point out, so that the Spanish people may know it, that those found guilty of the crimes of treason and espionage received special treatment. Until the war I had escaped by luck from the unpleasant task of signing a single death sentence. My own sense of humanitarianism and perhaps a certain imaginativeness caused me to pass through a nervous crisis every time I

had to sign a death sentence on a soldier who had left the trenches. It seemed inhuman to me. Actually I signed the sentences because my duty demanded it. What I could not understand was that the Government allowed me to order the execution of private soldiers, but did not allow me the necessary authority as an Army Commander to do the same with Senior Officers and Officers guilty of treason and espionage, many of whom had done irreparable harm. In one of the reports which I made periodically as a Commander I proposed to the War Minister that he should widen my powers, so that crimes of High Treason and Espionage could be judged by Military Tribunal, to make it clear that in a People's Army the life of a Senior Officer or an Officer who was a traitor was not respected more than that of a private soldier. In answer to this report the Minister of National Defence, Doctor Negrin, told me that he had considered the proposal and found it reasonable and just, and that they would try, in the Council of Ministers, to find a legal formula for it. But he warned me that it was a very delicate matter, because there were very few Commanders, among whom he included me, who would not abuse this authority.

As I imagined, the Minister of National Defence dropped the matter and a real injustice remained. The simple people continued to be cannon fodder.

In the matter of espionage, what happened abroad? Our side was unable to secure the work of any form of espionage or counter-espionage. On the other hand, the enemy did as he liked. He had a good foundation,

because the officials of the old Diplomatic Corps and Consular Service gave him wonderful support, helped by their friendships among politicians and in foreign banks. They watched the activities of all the Republican representatives and of the Commissions which were sent to buy war material and food for importation into Spain, and they knew the ports from which these were exported. This accounted for the great success of the enemy's Air Force and Navy, which destroyed and captured a great number of transport ships bound for the Republican zone.

In the People's Army we only had two such organisations. The S.I.M. (*Servicio de Investigación Militar*), and the S.I.E.P. (*Servicio de Investigación Especial Periferica*). The first was to function in our own territory, the second to gather information from the enemy zone, especially about the movement and concentration of forces. Both organisations were under the direct authority of the Minister of National Defence.

As regards the S.I.M., I have been informed that on more than one occasion it abused its powers. From my own experience I can state that during the ten months in which I was in command of the Central Army I found nothing to confirm this, nor were any accusations of the kind brought to me. When I took command of that Army I informed the Chief of the S.I.M. that it had come to my notice that he was using methods with some of his prisoners which I could not allow, and I told him that if I could prove these facts during the time I was in

command, I should punish his conduct with the greatest severity.

This organisation was extremely defective and unfortunately it could not be otherwise, since it was not possible, with an unselected personnel, to create any useful kind of intelligence service, especially within a few months and during a campaign. The wide range of powers which the Minister deputed to the people in this organisation constituted a real danger, whilst its effectiveness was very erratic.

As for the S.I.E.P., I can only say that it was a complete failure. During the whole time I was in command of the Central Army, I never received a single report of any value. This organisation, created by the advice of the "friendly advisers," was in direct relationship with the Informations Section of the Central General Staff, the commander of which was a militant member of the Communist Party. The result was a weapon as expensive as it was useless. It brought no benefit to the Republic, but on the other hand the Communist Party must have been extremely pleased with its activities, since it had plenty of motor-cars which gave splendid service, and could take advantage of its freedom of movement to make the work of propaganda in the trenches, by press and pamphlets, much easier, as well as distributing these things rapidly among the soldiers in the front lines.

I should be unjust if I put the whole weight of responsibility on the Communist Party. Unfortunately, everybody was more or less responsible. One must recognise, however, that this Party was most to blame. I must honestly declare that if the Communist Party had not put its political ambitions before the exigencies of warfare it would have been, without doubt, the most valuable of all. There were many officers attached to the Communist Party who died heroically, and plenty of Communist units which distinguished themselves by their impetuous fighting. The Party took great care of the morale of its troops and managed to improve their conditions, generally at the expense of others. This need not surprise us, as it had been proved that Communists in Spain did not practise the democratic teaching of Equality and Fraternity, probably because these do not figure in the democratic programme of the U.S.S.R.

Those of us who lived through the war know how often, beside a Unit of Spanish soldiers, infested with lice because they had no shirts to put on, shivering with cold for lack of fats and alcohol, and sighing for tobacco which very rarely arrived, one found another Unit, an International one, the troops of which were magnificently equipped and looked after, and could have the luxury of drinking coffee and brandy, and enjoy smoking because they received the normal ration of tobacco. I do not believe that their

generosity ever reached the point of giving their superfluous supplies to the men who needed them. None of this need seem strange, since, whilst the people of Madrid were dying of hunger and the soldiers suffering great privations on account of food deficiencies, our "friendly advisers" had all they needed, and looked after themselves most carefully.

Abuses like these took root on our soil. Plenty of public men and officers shared the people's sacrifices and troubles, but there were plenty, too, who found comfortable positions, and kept away from the risks and penalties of war. Some sought peace abroad (there are honourable exceptions), others remained in Spain, leading a life of luxury, and remaining insensible to the tragedy through which the people were living. These were the *bons viveurs* of the War, who satisfied their most frivolous desires, bathing in the blood of our heroes, and pampering themselves in readiness for the time when they would make the supreme sacrifice of ruling the destinies of Spain. What irony! I cannot believe that the Spanish people will carry their generosity to the point of trusting themselves again to those who abandoned them in their time of greatest danger. The people know these forgetful citizens and they should be warned lest one day they try to justify themselves by blaming others who, whatever may have been their mistakes and stupidities, at least had the decency to suffer the common sacrifices.

I declare sincerely that I do not feel any gratitude to the Russians for their so much boasted help in our people's



defence. Help is pleasant when it is given through generosity and honest motives. As I see it, it was not generous, since we paid for the goods received with hard money and with our own splendid generosity. The Russians were not attracted by the nobility of the Cause which the Spanish people were defending, since they were simply trying to impose their own political system, with the serious risk of betraying the Syndicalists, who represented the chief, the indispensable, forces to be used in the reconstruction of a Spain in ruins.

The Republican Army had bad leaders whose authority imposed Foreign political influences which led it to defeat. When leadership is lacking in so important an organisation, it is difficult for a foreign power, which calls itself friendly, to try to raise it up, even if it is in its own interest. Nevertheless when in a counter-offensive the Republican forces of Catalonia occupied an important bridge-head to the South of the Ebro Line, all the tacticians in Spain thought they could see in it a starting point for the French Army. And when the Nationalists began their offensive to recapture it, it seemed that this effort came not so much from fear that the republican forces would begin a whole offensive of re-conquest, as from the possibility that France would decide to intervene at last, and make it impossible that, with the Balearics and the Eastern Pyrenees lost, she would be cut off from her Colonial Empire, and that overnight France would find herself with, as it were, her hands and feet amputated in such a way that international balance would be disturbed. For

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this reason all efforts for peace were perfectly justified after the Nationalists had re-conquered Teruel, but when this opportunity was lost, circumstances made it necessary for us to continue the struggle in the hope that France would decide. But once the rich and important region of Catalonia was lost and consequently the Pyrenean frontier was closed, to continue the struggle was to be blind to all reason, and as I am going to show, it would have meant leading the people to the most barbarous and inhuman sacrifice in history.

## CHAPTER III

### THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATION IN SPAIN AFTER THE FALL OF CATALONIA

#### I

BOTH from the military and political point of view, the war was long since lost, and if we had been governed by a Spaniard, who would learn and interpret the will of the people, it would have ended in 1937. The unjustifiable collapse of the Catalonian fronts, the consequent loss of that region in which were all the most important industries, made our defeat perfectly clear. The factories and workshops, with all their machinery and immense quantities of materials, besides the whole administrative apparatus of the State, were in the enemy's hands, not to mention all the enormously important cities and ports, and the well-cultivated agricultural zone. The State organisation had been completely broken up and among its ruins were all the more moderate influences, both legislative and judicial. All that remained of our Government was a group of men who called themselves the legitimate Government of the Nation, but who were outside the country. These practically constituted a Dictatorship, since for some time past they had suppressed

the rights of the Head of the State, followed a war policy which was fatal as well as un-Spanish, and coerced certain Ministers, who seemed to be the slaves of their own timidity.

As a result of the fall of Catalonia the people and the Army were without contact with Negrin's Government, which was interned in France, and this impossible state of things lasted several days. In spite of the gravity of the situation which threatened the nation, the people did not want its return to Spain; on the contrary, they hoped it would remain abroad. The people, whose intuitions were keen enough, had realised that Negrin, so far from following the wishes of the masses, served interests foreign to his country, either through perverse weakness, or through convictions. He kept up the cry of "Resist!", a cry which the people, with tragic irony, repeated in order to make fun of the most serious dictates of the man who advised them to continue struggling when they had been living in a state of hunger for two years, suffering all kinds of dangers, sacrifices and privations, whilst he, leading a life of self-indulgence, kept an aeroplane ready for his flight and arranged his own economic situation abroad. The only support he had in continuing the tragic struggle came from the Communist Party, or from a few men who belonged to other political organisations, but who, in betrayal of their promises, served that party more or less unconditionally.

After the fall of Catalonia, the Government declared martial law in the Republican zone. On passing from a

state of alarm to that of Martial Law, I made a public declaration of the satisfaction I felt in taking charge of public order which, in the circumstances, could scarcely have been better in the whole zone under my jurisdiction. I can state that during the ten months in which I commanded the Central Army it was possible to walk about Madrid at any hour of the night in darkness, and with as much, or more, personal safety as in Paris or London. The people trusted absolutely that their personal safety would be guaranteed, whatever their political affiliations, as long as they were not guilty of criminal acts. I never had to use forceful means to maintain this. This was possible because the self-denying and heroic civil population of the capital were kind enough to distinguish me with their affection and confidence, possibly because I lived through their tragedy with them, watched for any possible improvement in their precarious conditions of life, and because I myself kept to an austere and hard-working regime, in which there was no vanity or show.

With Martial Law there was no need to change the orders which were already in force under the state of alarm so far as political public acts and press censorship were concerned. I took special trouble to see that the civil population should not have to change its mode of life, understanding that people who had such a high conception of their responsibility had no need to be deprived of what small pleasure they took in street-loitering, which so much alleviated their sufferings and privations. Not one grouse came from the people of Madrid for the hunger

they suffered during the long period of war. They stoically endured bombing by Nationalist aeroplanes, terrible sometimes when these raged over the most thickly populated areas. And later when the city was under the artillery fire of the enemy, who carried the refinement of cruelty to the point of prolonged firing on the central districts at the precise time at which the people were coming out of theatres and cinemas, the civil population still showed courage and indifference to enemy fire, a gallantry which was absolutely unique. In streets as severely punished as the popular Gran Via, the traffic was normal. If artillery fire commenced the people took refuge for a few moments in doors or corners, and when the moment of danger had passed continued their walk without taking much notice of the fact that a few hundred metres farther on shells were still bursting, considering such things the common incidents of city life.

It is interesting to note that as soon as Martial Law was declared all the political and syndicalist parties, including the Communist Party, put themselves unconditionally under my orders for whatever purpose.

Not twenty-four hours had passed from my taking charge of public order when the Communist Party began to take the measure of my energy in command in a manner as cynical as it was cunning. Actually, by my order, the Military Censorship forbade the publication in the paper *Mundo Obrero*, organ of that Party in Madrid, of a manifesto from their Political Bureau, in which they blackguarded in the vilest way the leader of the Spanish Socialist Party,

Señor Largo Caballero, calling him a coward, an assassin and a robber, and denouncing him for his flight to France. The manifesto had been printed in Figueras and it is curious to notice that the members of the Bureau which denounced the flight of Señor Largo Caballero were living quietly in Madrid.

I knew that the publication of this manifesto would arouse the indignation of the many followers that the Socialist Leader had in Madrid, and for that reason applied the censorship. But the Bureau, which thought itself above power and authority, committed the offence of inserting the manifesto in the *Mundo Obrero*. I immediately suspended the publication of this paper for an indefinite period. It happened that at that time, the Communist Minister, Señor Uribe, was in Madrid (February 27th, 1939) and when he heard of the suspension he telephoned me at two o'clock in the morning, telling me that he had asked the Prime Minister to lift my embargo, but that the latter had replied that he didn't wish to interfere with my authority. He told me that it was necessary for me to revoke the order of suspension so that the paper could be published next day. I replied that I was very sorry that he, as a Minister of the Republic, should make this petition, but that I would not revoke the order since the principle of authority was at stake and if I acceded to his request we might just as well drop the censorship, giving the press complete liberty to say whatever it liked. Needless to say, he did not accept my offer, because he knew what that would mean. On the following day, Señor

Uribe visited me at my headquarters and insisted that I should raise the suspension on that paper. He explained that his Party's war policy must be accepted, and that if they could not impose their policy any other way they were prepared to introduce a reign of terror to support it. I told him that I was sorry a Minister of the Republic should speak like that, and that a reign of terror did not frighten me. (I ought to state that during the time I was in command of the Central Army, the employees at my office, the cooks, the chauffeurs, the guard at General Headquarters, and the guard at my private house, belonged nearly all of them to the Communist Party.)

Next day the Communist Party distributed the forbidden manifesto in the streets of Madrid, set it on the walls of buildings, and even sent it, as I learnt afterwards, as far as the trenches themselves. I ordered that the manifesto should be called in and that the people who were distributing it should be imprisoned—among them, two Communist Assault Guards who had defied authority with drawn revolvers.

That day, the 28th of February, the Prime Minister arrived in Madrid. When his arrival was reported to me, I told him by telephone that there was no army news, but asked him to receive me as soon as possible to make my report. He told me that he wished to attend to some urgent matters, and that we should have our interview the next day. I imagine that he took advantage of this time to get information about my prestige in the capital. I gathered from a person in his confidence that afternoon



that he had signed orders promoting me to General. This made me extremely indignant, and aroused my suspicion that such a promotion (which was as inopportune as it was unnecessary), meant that he intended to replace me in my command of the Central Army. As we shall see later, I was not far wrong.

## 2

As we had arranged, the Prime Minister received me next day. Our interview lasted four hours. He began by telling me of my promotion to General, for which I felt no gratitude, but which I had to accept, although with the intention of not taking up the position.

Continuing, I showed him a telegraphic order which I had just received, and which was as follows:

*"Commander-in-Chief of the Army to Officer Commanding the Central Army. By Order of the Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence, please give orders as soon as possible that those arrested for distributing the manifestos of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party shall be set at liberty."*

I told the Prime Minister that for the first time in thirty-two years of military service, I had not obeyed an order from a superior officer, because I was not going to consent to throwing away the whole principle of authority. The Prime Minister answered that he had, as a matter of fact,

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given the order, but that General Miaja had not interpreted it correctly. Consequently he left the business to my judgment, and I naturally decided not to free those who had been guilty of the offence.

When these two most disagreeable points had been cleared up, we had a long conversation of which I here reproduce the most interesting part:

*Prime Minister:* Will you please give me your opinion on the general situation, General.

*Colonel Casado:* I consider, Prime Minister, that it is necessary to wind up the War, because the people wish it, and because it would be a crime of *lèse patrie* to continue shedding blood uselessly, subjecting everyone to conditions of such terrible sacrifice. As for the heroic civic population of Madrid it is suffering from such ghastly hunger that the most terrible consequences cannot long be delayed. One must remember that throughout the whole of the year 1938 and these months of 1939, the quantity of food allowed to each person has been 100 grms. of provisions and 150 grms. of bread per day, that those in charge of the food supplies have not milk for children of less than a year old and I have had to give them the milk reserves which we were keeping for soldiers in hospital. Also, that the civil population lacks fuel and only manages with almost insuperable difficulty to eat any cooked food, and that the poor people have recourse to the electric current. The disproportionate

development of war industries in Madrid and the excessive consumption which there is in private houses has meant an excessive charge on the electric supply, which is already very weak because the waters which supply power have fallen after the greatest drought of the century. (*The Prime Minister knew that I had given a strict order forbidding banquets, especially among army officers, some of whom gorged on the provisions whilst the people were dying of hunger. The Prime Minister himself was not blameless in this respect, nor did he attempt to conceal the lavishness of his entertainment.*)

Those who come from outside take away a wrong impression of their lightning visit because they cannot imagine the tragedy through which these magnificent people are living. Comfortably staying in hotels and well fed, they see only what goes on in theatres, cinemas and cafés, without realising that only twenty or thirty thousand people are living on the War, while nearly a million inhabitants of Madrid conceal their private dramas, almost entirely lack food and have their nervous systems stretched to breaking point by the continual tension caused by ever-present danger of bombardment.

*Prime Minister:* The situation does seem truly tragic, and I am going to give orders immediately that supplies of provisions and bread for fifteen days shall be sent to Madrid. (*He made this offer as the result of a hint of mine that there were only provisions and bread in the city for two days.*)

*Colonel Casado:* Allow me to point out that even if these provisions are in our ports, it would not even be possible to secure the supplies you mention, because we lack means of transport. The Railway has a capacity of 800 tons. Provisions and bread for the civil population of Madrid and the Central Army, calculated with the greatest economy, means a thousand tons a day. It would be necessary, therefore, to supplement railway transport of this supply with lorries. But the shortage in these is terrible. Moreover, we lack spare parts, accessories and particularly tyres.

*Prime Minister:* What do you think about the situation from the military point of view?

*Colonel Casado:* We are completely abandoned by those powers whose duty it was to help us, and our means of importation of war material and provisions are closed. It would be necessary, if we are to continue fighting, to do so with the means we already have. Our war industries were reduced by seventy per cent by the fall of Catalonia, and having no raw materials we can do nothing. As I say, we lack all provisions. Though the harvest in our zone has been got in Madrid is without reserve food deposits, and should the enemy achieve the cutting of communications with Levant, as they intend to do, we should have to surrender within forty-eight hours, or die of hunger, with the serious risk that mass fear might produce a real catastrophe. Moreover, there is the possibility that

part of this population might perish among the ruins, as a result of the terrible aerial attacks which the enemy has prepared to combine with his powerful artillery fire.

The Army is without the means of fighting. It suffers from the effects of the morbid policy of political proselytising which has converted it into an ineffective weapon. There are many parts of the Army which have been changed into mere fields for political domination. The Communist Party rules the Air Force, the Tanks and the Transport, that is to say, it has its hands on the vital organisms of the Army. This Party has worked with great success to attract to itself commanders and officers. In actual fact, seventy per cent of the commands of the great units are in the hands of Communists; some of them, the minority, have joined the Party in good faith, others through fear, or through ambition. Without exaggeration this work of conversion and intense political activity carried on among the armed units, has lowered the fighting power of the Army. Our officers, moreover, have not the training necessary for mobile warfare, in spite of the fact that they have incomparable troops, worthy of a better fate. Those of our troops who are now defending the fronts are suffering from the moral depression caused by our loss of Catalonia, and their physical weakness has been increased by their need of food, and their sufferings in the trenches during an extremely hard

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winter without shoes, overcoat or cape. For reserves, we have only eight divisions, badly trained, worse armed and with deficient commanders. They have practically no automatic arms and you know perfectly well that we have very little artillery and only forty aeroplanes. The latter are already worn out and being of many different models, without any kind of uniformity, they are in any case difficult to use.

On the other hand, the enemy has concentrated a great part of his reserves in the region to the South of Madrid with the idea of starting the decisive battle. He has thirty-two divisions ready for that, with abundant automatic arms, great masses of tanks and artillery, and the support of at least six hundred aeroplanes. In these circumstances if we wait for the offensive which is already prepared for the conquest of Madrid, our front will inevitably be broken in the first day of battle.

*Prime Minister:* Certainly the situation is truly critical.

Nevertheless we have 10,000 machine guns, 600 aeroplanes and 500 pieces of artillery waiting in France. I understand we are going to have some difficulty in arranging the sending of this material. But there is nothing to do but to resist, because (I ought to tell you), every effort to arrange peace has failed.

*Colonel Casado:* I understand that there are so many difficulties in the way of getting this war material of which you speak to Spain, that it will never arrive.

I think, therefore, that resistance is no longer possible. I think that you ought to go at once to treat with the enemy, and I offer myself to take part in the negotiations.

*Prime Minister:* Just so. If it is necessary, I will take advantage of your offer.

*Colonel Casado:* Think, Prime Minister, of your great responsibility to posterity and the fearful and certainly tragic consequences for Spain which will come from your decision to resist. Also, it is quite essential that the Communist Party drops its present attitude.

*Prime Minister:* It is my duty to tell you that I am neither a Socialist nor a Communist, that I fully realise my position, but that whilst there is no one to dismiss me, I cannot very well go. As for the Communists, if it is necessary, I will throw them out on their ears.

Negrin is a disconcerting man, and as a matter of fact is not a Marxist, but has more the tastes and behaviour of the refined bourgeoisie. He seemed to me a paradoxical fellow, with extraordinary reserves of energy, but very weak-willed. The things he does are quite extraordinary. I could see from the few sentences which he spoke, and which I have reproduced exactly here, that he was in a most difficult situation and that his greatest wish was to find any means at all of getting out of his own position of authority. It seemed to me that the Communist Party was using him for its own ends, to the indignation of all of us who were loyal democrats, who felt the tragedy of war, and

believed in the cause which the Spanish people were defending with such ill-requited valour.

That same day, Dr. Negrin and I made an appointment to go to Albacete on the following day, for a meeting of the High Military Command. This meeting turned out to be historical, as I shall explain later.

As soon as our discussion was finished, on the morning of the same day (February 25th) Dr. Negrin met members of the Popular Front, whom he had called together at the Prime Minister's house. Some of these visited me before their meeting with him to tell me that they felt inclined to insist that the Prime Minister should explain his war policy clearly, and also to convince him that it was madness to continue his scheme of resistance, and moreover to make him understand that we were not going to tolerate the behaviour of the Communist Party any longer, since this party was impudently trying by all the means in its power to impose its own opinions on the other parties and syndicalist organisations. I told them that this seemed a very good plan, and that I very much hoped that the Prime Minister would appreciate the sincerity of their purpose, and how it would benefit the cause of the people, of whom they were the direct representatives, and of whose opinion they were able to feel the pulse.

As had been arranged, their meeting with the Prime Minister took place. He followed his usual practice, which was to explain the general situation and the probabilities of getting imports of armaments, provisions, etc. He spoke for an hour and a half on this theme, giving play to the



wildest flights of imagination. As soon as he had finished, and a member of the Popular Front was going to speak, he told him that he was very sorry not to be able to remain longer with them as he had a dinner engagement. The Popular Front representatives, surprised at the Prime Minister's decision not to listen to them, instead of taking a strong line and insisting that Dr. Negrin should allow them to explain their opinions, preferred to be silent, and simply regretted his procedure. There is no doubt that on this occasion the Popular Front gave proof of unpardonable weakness, considering the gravity of the situation. This weakness made me think that the help which they had on so many occasions offered me would not be as effective as one could wish. As a matter of fact, in the afternoon of the same day I called together the leaders of the Popular Front to my office with, naturally, representatives of the Communist Party. I told them that I did not intend to tolerate the disrespect and impudence of that Party, such as had been shown in the affair of the manifesto, and that I had called them together to tell them this. I said that they should not be surprised at any decisions I might make, since my attempts at cordial relationships had failed. At this meeting members of the various parties and syndicates explained that if the Communists did not completely change their attitude they intended to expel the Party from the Popular Front. On this occasion I realised that they meant what they said. Although the Communists persistently promised that from then onwards there would be the greatest cordiality between them, I felt

sure that things would not really change. That same night the Press published a paragraph in which it was explained that the Popular Front intended to expel the Communist Party as undesirable if it did not change its attitude.

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A few minutes after my meeting with the Popular Front representatives the Prime Minister announced to me that he had called together the Army High Commands and those of the Navy and Air Force to a meeting at which he would preside on the following day at eleven o'clock, at Los Llanos Aerodrome, Albacete. He also told me that we should travel together, so that we might take advantage of the journey to discuss certain extreme measures. The same evening he telephoned to tell me that he had given up the idea of our travelling together to save me the trouble of waiting for him, since he had to arrange some important matters with the Civil Authorities before he left Madrid. I realised that this was only a pretext, since it was no trouble to me to wait for him. We had arranged that he should call for me at my Headquarters, where I should have been in any case, and which was on the route he had to follow. Since he had anyhow to preside over the meeting of the various commanders there was no object in my getting there any earlier. I am absolutely convinced that the Prime Minister meant us to travel together but

that the Communist Party did not like the idea, thinking it was dangerous perhaps, and consequently had made him change his mind.

The journey by car from Madrid to Albacete takes four hours. In order to be there at eleven o'clock, I left my Headquarters at seven o'clock in the morning. On arriving at Ocaña, where the roads to Andalucia and Levante fork, I found the Prime Minister's car and that of his escort filling up with petrol. My aide-de-camp asked the police where the Prime Minister was, and was told that he was having a walk along the Andalucia road, five hundred metres from the point where the cars were filling up. It seemed very strange that the Prime Minister should be taking a walk, since he would have to hurry to be at Los Llanos Aerodrome at eleven o'clock, the time at which our meeting had been arranged. But it seemed even more strange that he should walk along the Andalucia road, and not on the one towards Albacete. Consequently I ordered that my motorists and escort should wait for me at the fork, and told my chauffeur to go along the Andalucia road to catch up with the Prime Minister. Five hundred metres from the fork I saw a group of about ten men on foot, with the Prime Minister walking in front with one of his secretaries, and the others in little groups behind. When I came up with them I stopped my car, and opened the door. I could see that the Prime Minister's guards had their hands on their revolvers, and I noticed that Dr. Negrin was most perturbed. After greeting him, and giving him the army news, I told him that if his car was

damaged mine was at his disposition, so as not to make him late for the meeting. The Prime Minister, rather disconcerted, told me that he was very grateful for my attentiveness, but that I could continue my journey because he wished to stay here a little while to take a walk. Nothing could have been more absurd than this excuse.

However, I continued my journey towards Albacete and told my chauffeur to drive quickly. I intended thus to arrive before the Prime Minister, but actually we had scarcely been travelling half an hour when he passed us, his car travelling very fast. From then onwards I followed closely. The police with him seemed to be very nervous for they were constantly looking out of the window at the back of the car.

All this completely unjustified behaviour made me realise that Dr. Negrin thought I was going to arrest him. He had probably had the idea put into his head by someone who wanted to cut him off from any influence of mine.

At about eleven o'clock I arrived at the magnificent aerodrome of Los Llanos, which stands on a splendid estate of that name, the property of the Marques de Larios. At twelve o'clock all those who had been summoned to the meeting had arrived; General Miaja, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Matallana, in command of Aggroupment, General Menendez, in command of the Levante Army, General Escobar, in command of the Extremadura Army, Colonel Moriones, in command of the Andalucia Army, Admiral Buiza, in command

of the Navy, and General Bernal, Military Commander in Cartagena.

At twelve-fifteen, the meeting began with Dr. Negrin in the chair. He told us that he had summoned us to explain the general situation, also the attempts he had made to negotiate peace. When he had finished, he would want to know our opinions as to the wisdom or unwisdom of continuing the war.

The Prime Minister took two hours to give his information, always emphasising the need to resist. He told us he thought the situation very serious, but that circumstances made it imperative for us to continue the war. He said that the problem of catering and transport could be solved. As for armaments, apart from the war material which was in France as a result of the retreat from Catalonia, there were very large quantities of machine-guns, batteries and aeroplanes, all acquired by the Government in other countries, and that probably all these armaments could be brought to Spain, though he did not know exactly what decision France would make on this point. With regard to the troops which had retreated from Catalonia and were now interned in France, he said that he was making efforts to arrange for their repatriation and incorporation in the Republican Army, efforts which, up to that moment, had not been effective.

He continued with all the loquacity and lack of precision which characterised him, to inform us about the efforts he had made for Peace. According to him, since the

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month of May 1937, he had followed all the proceedings necessary to enter into negotiations with the enemy, including using his friendship with certain Nationalists, but that there had been no result for his attempts. He said that he had suggested to the British Government that it should intervene as a mediator, but that it should act as though it were doing the thing of its own accord and not as though he had initiated it, since it would be more effective this way, though unhappily there had been no result. He ended by telling us that he had failed in his efforts for peace and that, therefore, there was nothing to do but resist. It did not occur to him to tell us that having failed in this intention he had decided to resign, so that a Government might be formed which could achieve what he was unable to achieve.

As a curious detail, I think it is worth recording that during the Prime Minister's speech, Señor Alvarez del Vayo came into the office where we had met, and on seeing him, the Prime Minister told him in an irritable way to go away because he had no business there. It was quite obvious that Dr. Negrin was upset, because it was plainly neither correct nor civil to talk to a Cabinet Minister in this way in the presence of military commanders. The incident gave me great personal satisfaction. Why did the Prime Minister show this attitude to one who would have seemed to be his favourite Minister? It would be very interesting to know what sort of bonds united these two men who by their conduct have caused the Spanish people such suffering and sacrifice.

When the Prime Minister had finished his speech, the meeting was adjourned to be continued after lunch. It would seem quite natural that the Commanders who had met there should have exchanged rapid impressions on the effect which the Prime Minister had produced, so that they might know in a general way what opinions would be given in their own speeches. As a matter of fact we had no time for this, nor was it necessary, because things had gone so far that without any previous accord our opinions coincided, particularly on the necessity of negotiating peace as quickly as possible.

After lunch the session was renewed at about four o'clock. The Prime Minister called upon General Matallana to speak, as Head of Aggrouppment. He spoke magnificently and gave with absolute sincerity his opinion that it would be madness to continue the struggle, because it would mean much useless bloodshed. Among many minor considerations he gave several opinions which coincided with those which I had put to the Prime Minister a few days before in Madrid. He said that since the fall of Catalonia the people and the Army had had their morale broken down by hunger and that they knew perfectly well that the war should end as soon as possible. That our war industries, terribly reduced by the fall of Catalonia, were incapable of producing the indispensable minimum for continuing the struggle. Moreover, we lacked raw materials. That the scarcity of provisions made this time of privations more tragic, because with each day that passed importation was more difficult, since the

enemy strengthened and widened the blockade of our ports. We lacked clothing and equipment for the troops and this had contributed to their demoralisation. We were at such a disadvantage as the moment approached for the decisive battle that, if we had to fight, it would be with very small reserves, with practically no artillery and what we had of poor quality. Our machine-guns were so scarce that one battalion of the enemy had the same quantity as four of our battalions had, and we lacked trench mortars for reserve units. The effectiveness of our Air Force and Tanks was practically nil, as also that of our anti-tank and anti-aircraft material, so scarce were they. Our transport facilities were very limited, so that our mobility was deficient. Moreover, there was no news to support the supposition that our Transport could be improved, since for a long time we had lacked accessories and spare parts.

Our Commanders, with the best will in the world, and ready to sacrifice themselves on the altars of Spain and the Republic, lacked the training necessary for mobile warfare, since although it was true that they had learned something of defence tactics, they were still incapable of the manœuvres of retreat and counter-attack.

The enemy, after the conquest of Catalonia, had proceeded to concentrate its reserves on other fronts, moving most of them to the region south of Madrid. Six Army Corps had been identified in this zone, perfectly equipped with machine-guns and artillery, and having the support of at least seven hundred aeroplanes and a



great number of tanks. In such conditions, it was obvious that our fronts could not resist in a way which might hold up the enemy attack, and if communications with the Levante were cut the Central Army would have to surrender, and the fall of Madrid would mean the almost total loss of our war industries, which would make it impossible, if the war continued, to produce the first necessities of the Armies of the Levante, Extremadura and Andalucia. He ended his very valuable and well-documented speech by advocating a most urgent negotiation of peace, and appealing to the humane and patriotic sentiments of the Prime Minister.

Afterwards the four Army Commanders spoke, and what they said coincided with the opinion expressed by General Matallana. For my part, I amplified his details on two essential points—the reaction which would be felt by the civil population of Madrid if the enemy cut our communications with the Levante, and the need of following the desires of the people and not those of foreign powers. It was beyond doubt that if Madrid were isolated there would be a possibility of a phenomenal collective terror, caused by fear of Nationalist reprisals, which would lead to violence, including the use of the huge quantity of explosives. In that case Madrid might become a heap of ruins. On the question of peace I submitted that the purposes of Italy, Germany and Russia, and perhaps other nations, were the same—that the struggle should continue in Spain for as long as possible. I said that we should not tolerate that the blood of Spaniards and their

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small economic reserves should be lost in prolonging a war to maintain the balance of power between these Powers.

Consequently, I proposed that Peace negotiations should be taken up with the enemy at once so that as many might be saved as was humanly possible, and that during the period of negotiations the Popular Front should try to raise the fallen morale of the civil population, whilst commanders and officers should do the same among the armed units, since a high morale was necessary both to get the best possible peace terms and to resist if the enemy refused to make peace.

The speech of the Naval Commander, Admiral Buiza, produced a most unhappy impression. This officer, with a very rare sincerity, said that the Navy had decided to leave Spanish waters if peace were not rapidly negotiated, since a commission representing the crews had told him that they were convinced that the war was lost and that they did not mean to go on suffering the intense bombardments which Nationalist aeroplanes made against them daily, and which they could not resist because they had no anti-aircraft defence.

In answer to this serious declaration by Admiral Buiza the Prime Minister said that he could not allow this attitude on part of the crews, and that when they threatened not to do their duties, their leaders should have been shot as ringleaders in sedition. The Navy Chief said that he agreed with the Prime Minister, but that he had not punished them because he honestly believed they were right and that it was intolerable that the crews should be

at the mercy of the Nationalist aircraft, for this caused a great number of deaths without the men having a chance to defend themselves, and did not help the war. He ended by saying that in his opinion the war was irredemiably lost and that peace should be negotiated as soon as possible.

Then the Chief of the Air Force, Colonel Camacho, spoke, saying that he only had three squadrons of Natacha aeroplanes, two of Katiuskas, and about twenty-five chaser planes. He said that he could not use this aircraft, since owing to the quantity and quality of the Nationalist planes to do so would be sending our heroic airmen to certain death, without helping the course of war in the slightest. He proposed Peace negotiations.

When the Head of the Air Force had finished his short speech, General Bernal, the Military Commandant of Cartagena, gave his opinion that peace negotiations were necessary and very urgent, not only for the powerful reasons already given, but because at any moment the most terrible things might happen among the civil population. (What happened later in Cartagena, confirmed this opinion of General Bernal's.)

The Prime Minister, either deliberately or not, had not invited the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Miaja, to speak, and when the Prime Minister was about to reply to these speeches, General Miaja expressed his displeasure at not being asked for his opinion, as Supreme Head of our Forces on Land, Sea and Air. The President ironically, or sincerely, told the General that as he was in

the most authoritative position at this meeting, he wanted him to speak last. Nothing could have been more absurd than this reasoning. General Miaja, visibly excited, then said that he was a believer in resistance at all costs. This hasty opinion produced a bad impression upon us. I at once replied to this opinion of General Miaja's that if this belief in resistance should prevail I thought that all the Commanders should bring their families to Spain, and in the true military spirit as indicated in Army Orders, we should be the last to leave.

Finally the Prime Minister spoke at length without saying anything concrete, and repeated the conclusion that since the enemy refused to make peace, the only thing to do was to resist.

When the meeting was over the Prime Minister went to Yuste, and I returned to Madrid. In spite of the tiring nature of the day, I could not sleep during the journey. I arrived at Madrid at four o'clock in the morning, and still I could not sleep. The Prime Minister's attitude had made a very sad impression on me and I was convinced that it was due to the work of the Communist Party. I could not wipe out of my imagination the terrible picture which my people would present in a few days time, when the enemy's great offensive would have started, and yet I could not decide to rebel for fear of doing greater harm.

In the afternoon of the following day (February 27th), the Chief of the General Staff of Aggroupment told me by private wire that Prime Minister Negrin had nominated General Matallana to be Chief of the General Staff of the

whole army. At the same time, he gave me notice of the promotion to General of Colonel Modesto, a member of the Communist Party who was meant to relieve me in the command of the Central Army.

This most important news, in spite of its most confidential and private nature, reached the ears of the military commanders and the civil population in Madrid with extraordinary rapidity. The same night, military commanders, civil authorities and members of the political and syndicalist parties, some personally and others by telephone, enquired of my aides if it were true that I had been relieved of my command of the Central Army. My aides, by my orders, did not confirm this, but even so many senior officers told me of their unconditional loyalty and their wish that the command should not be handed over to Colonel Modesto. These proofs of trust and affection were a great stimulus to me, and pleased me, even if I did not need them, for I had already taken the firm decision not to hand over my command to him.

On the following day the Director General of Security in giving me the news of the previous day told me that there had been great nervousness among the people when they had heard that I was being relieved, and that during the night he had been visited by several diplomats, asking for safe conduct passes to leave Madrid at once. The Diplomatic Corps and civil population of Madrid were both terrified by the possibility of the Communists getting control of the situation.

As I learned later the Prime Minister had told the

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Council of Ministers that he saw himself obliged to relieve me of the Command of the Central Army, since he needed to use me as a tactician on the General Staff of the whole army. Several Ministers told him that in their opinion this would be dangerous in view of the affection in which the Madrid populace held me. I heard that the Prime Minister replied that as Minister of National Defence he should make use of his officers in whatever way seemed best to him, and that these had only to obey.

In a telephone conversation which I had with the Prime Minister he denied that he had given orders for my relief, but I telephoned to the Civil Governor of Madrid, who told me that he had these orders in his hands for publication in the Gazette, but that the Prime Minister had told him to delay them until further orders. From this it will be seen that the Prime Minister was working with caution to avoid a false step in carrying out his plan.

That same evening, I received a telegram from the Prime Minister, telling me that on the following day (March 1st), at 11 o'clock I should come to his house at Yuste for a meeting at which General Matallana would also be present.

It was necessary to hand over the command of the Central Army during my absence to the officer next in order of seniority, in this case, Col. Ortega, Head of the Third Army Corps, a distinguished and militant member of the Communist Party. I chose not to carry out this formality, and told the Colonel-in-Chief of my General Staff that, in a language understood between us,

he should inform me at Yuste of anything that might turn up.

At 11 o'clock on the 1st of March we met, General Matallana, I, and the Prime Minister, and he told us that he proposed to re-organise the Central General Staff and General Staff of the Army, intending us to be their respective heads. He explained that he understood the difficulties, but he thought it necessary and urgent, since, without tacticians at his side, he could do nothing effective to hold the next enemy offensive.

He gave us all kinds of reasons to convince us that it was quite impossible to handle such organisations without tacticians. We reiterated once more that he ought to give up his idea of resisting, and that he could only be leading us to a great disaster. The Prime Minister said nothing concrete in reply to this, talked on different subjects for some time, and then said good-bye to us, telling us that he would advise us when the opportunity arose.

As we went out, we met Señor Alvarez del Vayo, who seems to me the evil genius of Spain.

How is it possible that Dr. Negrin and his advisers could expect to carry on government by any sound and honourable means, without men, without archives, without any of the things which are necessary if government is to be effective? Did Dr. Negrin imagine that the executive power could function in his little hotel in Yuste with two typists for the work, and five hundred soldiers as an escort? The irony could not be greater.

From Yuste, I went to Valencia with General Matallana.

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I wanted to meet General Menendez, Head of the Levante Army, and Col. Ruiz-Fornell, Head of the General Staff of the Extremadura Army. I told them of my intention to rebel against the Government. General Matallana and the other two Commanders offered me their unconditional support and warned me that the Communist commanders of certain units of their armies made it possible that these units would try to suppress an anti-governmental movement. It was not possible for me to have an interview with Col. Moriones, Commander of the Andalucia Army, although I thought it very necessary, in the first place because the Communist Party had very little following in that Army, and in the second place because Col. Moriones had sent a confidential letter to the Chief of Aggrouppment eight days ago, warning him that I was thinking of rising against Negrin's Government.

At dawn on March 3rd I arrived in Madrid.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE COUP D'ÉTAT

#### I

ON my arrival in Madrid on the morning of the 3rd, I felt exhausted and ill. In spite of this, remembering that the Prime Minister was trying to precipitate events in order to put the Communist Party in power, I made appointments one after the other with representatives of each of the parties and organisations, and they visited me that morning. I explained the situation to them and the necessity of achieving a *coup d'état* as quickly as possible. As a result, from the afternoon of that day each of these parties and organisations was on the alert, and their leaders awaited my orders.

After these interviews I called to my office the Colonel-in-Chief of my General Staff and the Colonels in command of the Sections. I told them that in view of present events I considered it necessary to rebel against Negrin's government. They made it clear to me that they were unconditionally at my command, and did not attempt to hide the satisfaction which my decision gave them. I gave the Colonel-in-Chief concrete instructions about the measures of security I had thought it necessary to take,

principally in anticipation of the aggressive attitude which the Communist Party would probably take up, with such of the military forces as might follow it.

Afterwards I received the Commander of the Fourth Army Corps, Lieut.-Col. Cipriano Mera, with whom I had been in touch for some days, and who had repeatedly offered me his loyal and unconditional support. I told him from that moment to await an order to hand over the command of his Army Corps and take charge of the Central Army, which he would receive as soon as the National Council of Defence could be formed.

I then received General Cabrera, Military Commandant of Madrid, also the Director-General of Security, and the Chief of the S.I.M. (*Servicio de Investigacion Militar*—Military Investigation Service), to whom I gave the necessary instructions, so that they might be ready to carry out my orders.

About 8 o'clock the Señorita Rosario del Olmo was announced. She was the chief of the Foreign Press Department, and according to information which I had received, was working for the Communist Party. She came to tell me that it was proposed next day to issue a manifesto to the whole country, in which it would be stated that the people and the army supported the war policy so admirably directed by the Government of National Union, over which Dr. Negrin presided, and that it ought to appear in this manifesto that my personal loyalty to Dr. Negrin was unshaken. Since I was dealing with a woman I concealed my indignation, and simply told her

that neither the Central Army nor I could make a public declaration of our unconditional adhesion to the Government, that such a thing was absolutely forbidden, and that armed forces which behaved in this manner would be cancelling the prerogatives of the Head of State, and maintaining an attitude of latent rebellion. When I had made this clear to the Señorita del Olmo, I thought of another manifesto which would soon be circulated, and in which would be expressed, in a clear and final manner, the aversion of the people and the armed forces for that same Government of National Union.

At 8.15 I received a telegram from the Prime Minister in which he ordered me to present myself at his house at 11 o'clock next morning. This document made me suspect an arrest, so I immediately telephoned General Matallana, and asked him if he had been summoned by the Prime Minister. He told me that as a matter of fact he had been called for 11 o'clock next morning. I told General Matallana that for my part I should not think of attending, because I believed it meant an arrest, and I advised him to do the same. In spite of my warning he decided to obey the order, and told me so. Afterwards I talked, also by telephone, with General Miaja. He told me that he also had been summoned by the Prime Minister at the same time, but that he would not obey the order, because he believed that they wished to arrest us, thus confirming my impression with the weight of his own experience.

At 8.0 I telephoned to the Prime Minister to tell him

that the state of my health would prevent me from making a five hours' journey by car, and leaving at daybreak, which would be necessary if I was to keep the appointment. The Prime Minister replied most amiably that he had forgotten my health, and that of course it was in his interest to prevent any relapse. He said that to save me trouble I should have a Douglas aeroplane sent for me on the following day at 10.0, and that it would wait in Barajas airport, quite near my home.

I had quite decided not to keep the appointment, but in face of this civility of the Prime Minister's I did no more than express my gratitude. On the morning of the 4th, at about 10.0, the Chief of the Airport of Barrajas told me that a Douglas aeroplane which had been sent by the Prime Minister had landed. I told him to call the pilot to the telephone, and told the latter to return to the aerodrome from which he had come, because I should not need him. Two hours later the Prime Minister telephoned to me again, and with great violence and excitement told me of his surprise at the aeroplane's return. I said that I had decided not to make the journey, because I was really ill, and also because it did not seem wise to leave Madrid to-day in view of the situation. The Prime Minister, getting more and more excited, said that he must see me before 6.0 that afternoon, and would therefore send me another aeroplane, so that I should go to Yuste with the Cabinet Ministers who were in Madrid. It seemed to me discreet not to argue, and although I had decided not to leave the capital, I told the Prime Minister

that I would arrange matters with the Ministers. A few minutes later General Miaja called me, and told me that my presence was absolutely necessary in Valencia, so that we should be together, and that his aeroplane would arrive at any moment at the airport to take me over. I replied that I could not leave Madrid, and that as soon as they told me that his aeroplane had arrived I should send it back. (Undoubtedly General Miaja, who knew of my purpose, thought it would be better that the *coup d'état* should be given in Valencia). If I had done as General Miaja wished, my failure would have been quite certain.

When I had finished my conversation with General Miaja, the Colonel-in-Chief of my staff entered my office, with a sheet of official orders in his hands. He appeared to be very upset. For a man who was by temperament usually calm he showed great agitation, so much so that he could not read, and handed over the orders to me. He was right in showing excitement; these orders published the fact that young Colonel Modesto, a member of the Communist Party, had been made a General, and that Lieut.-Colonels Galán, Vega and Fagüena, also well-known Communists, had been made military commandants in the most important centres of Murcia, Cartagena and Alicante.

Reading these orders confirmed my belief that Dr. Negrin meant to arrest me, with General Miaja and General Matallana, in order to carry out his plan. I noticed that the President had called us to Yuste at about

the time of day at which I should have normally received the official orders.

Convinced that Dr. Negrin meant to hand over all commands to the Communist Party next day, at two o'clock, without any sort of hesitation I sent round an order to the political parties and syndicalist organisations, the commanding officer of the Fourth Army Corps, the military Commandant of Madrid, the Director-General of Security, and the Head of the S.I.M. to be ready at 8.0 to carry out the instructions I had already given.

Afterwards I telephoned to the Minister of Communications, Señor Giner de Los Rios, who was at that moment lunching with his fellow Cabinet Ministers, Velao, Gomez, Blanco, Moix and Gonzalez Peña. I told him that the President had just informed me by telephone that he was sending a Douglas aeroplane for the Ministers and for me, to take us to Yuste that afternoon. He told me that the President had also spoken to him about this and that if I had time I should go and have coffee with them, and arrange our departure from Madrid. I accepted the invitation, and at half-past three I was with the six Cabinet ministers in the Civil Government Building.

They were as usual very downcast and preoccupied, even, it seemed to me, rather ashamed of themselves. When I had been alone with any one of them he had expressed his regret to me at the conduct of the Prime Minister (except Señor Moix), but when they were together none of them dared to say anything of the sort.

We started talking, and I said that in spite of the

President's wishes I thought it a matter of elementary caution to stay in Madrid, because the situation made it necessary, and that therefore they must not count on me to go with them. Taking advantage of the fact that the window on the balcony was open, I was able to talk for a few minutes alone with Señor Velao, to whom I explained my indignation at the facts published in the official orders for that day. I told him that I thought such behaviour was intolerable. He looked pained, but agreed. Thinking of the personal safety of these gentlemen, I suggested that they should stay in Madrid. He seemed to like the proposal, because he immediately began talking to Gomez and Giner de los Rios in a rather mysterious fashion, and they decided to ask the Prime Minister to postpone the cabinet meeting which was fixed for that evening in Yuste. Thereupon Señor Velao telephoned to the Prime Minister suggesting this, but it seemed that Dr. Negrin's answer was so violent that he cut short the conversation, telling Señor Velao that they should come immediately. That little scene has left me a most wretched recollection. I cannot bear to think that a virile people, with such a fine sense of responsibility, should have been governed by these timorous creatures.

I took my leave of the Ministers and quickly went to Army Headquarters, since the Colonel-in-Chief of my staff had told me by telephone that my presence was necessary there, to hear some very serious news. As soon as I entered, he told me that the Republican Navy had risen against Negrin's Government, had left the port of

Cartagena and put out to sea. He also told me that according to information he had received this most important port was in the hands of the Nationalists, who, it seemed, had struck a blow from the sea, working with the *Falange* in Cartagena. I immediately entered into communication with the General in Command of Aggroupment, and the news that I received was very confused and contradictory. I tried to telephone the Chief of the Naval Base at Cartagena, but I could not get him. This news added to the concern which was already weighing me down just then.

## 2

The Ministers started off at about 4.0 and the Prime Minister was informed from the airport at Barrajas that the aeroplane had left with its passengers, but he was not told that I was staying in Madrid. When the Ministers arrived and presented themselves to the Prime Minister they probably explained to him that I had stayed in Madrid because the gravity of the situation there made it inadvisable that I should be absent from the capital. My rebellious attitude in the face of his repeated commands should have shown him what we were preparing, but perhaps thinking that he still had time to carry out his plan, he telephoned to me at 7 o'clock, ordering me to come to his home next day, because he considered it absolutely necessary.

Instead of refusing I simply said that if the situation



had grown no worse I would be in Yuste next day. In making this promise to the Prime Minister I was not lying, because if I had not rebelled five hours later, I should have gone to Yuste, but as a prisoner, while Madrid would have already been in the hands of the Communists.

At half-past seven I took up my quarters in the former Chancellery of the Exchequer, choosing this not because it was the best place for the National Council of Defence, but because the building was planned to be easily defended in case, as I imagined, there should be a Communist rising. This great house, in which are concealed so many of the secrets of public administration, had also served as a headquarters of the army defending Madrid in the tragic days of November 1936, when the city had been bombarded by Nationalist artillery and aeroplanes. I do not think that there can be another building which has housed so many of the shames of financial administration and the brave emotions of war.

Since I had arranged two days before that everything necessary should be installed there for when the moment should arrive, I began to work in quite decent conditions.

At eight o'clock I gathered in my office the future members of the National Council of Defence, except for General Miaja, who was still in Valencia, and who did not know that we should make the *coup d'état* that night. We quickly began to arrange our various offices, which only produced one difficulty, but a difficulty of some importance—that of the presidency. Among the ministers it was assumed that I should hold this position as well as

being Councillor for National Defence, but I explained that I was against this, in the first place because I am anti-militarist (in the precise sense of the word) and also because I did not wish that what I was doing out of loyalty to the people should be interpreted as personal ambition.

I told the members of the Council that I thought Señor Besteiro should be President as well as Home Secretary. They accepted this, but Señor Besteiro himself, for reasons which he had already explained to me, and which up to a certain point I considered valid, blankly refused to accept the position and said that I should do so, because the only lawful thing at that moment was military power, since we were living under martial law, and since the President of the Republic had irrevocably resigned. In these circumstances I accepted the Presidency of the Council, as well as responsibility for National Defence. I did this in order to avoid complications and the postponement of the *coup d'état*, but as we shall see later, five hours after the new Council was formed I found a more legal and correct way of carrying out my wishes (by nominating General Miaja President of the Council.)

We then read in Council the Manifesto which, according to a plan already agreed upon, was going to be broadcast at ten o'clock.

It was not possible to arrange the broadcast at that time because the troops who were to protect vital centres such as the Ministry of the Interior, the General Direction of Security, the Military Command of Madrid, the Bank of

Spain, the Ministry of Communications, etc., arrived late because of transport difficulties, and it would have been dangerous to have had the declaration broadcast before they had taken up their positions. So we arranged that the manifesto should be broadcast at midnight, the time at which radio listeners were accustomed to listen-in to hear the official war news, particularly in these days when nervousness was at breaking point, since everyone in Madrid knew that for some days the Nationalist Army had had everything ready for its great offensive against Madrid. (Men and women who during the whole war had kept a stiff upper lip and had believed without reserve in our eventual victory, for some days now had been saying in workshops and factories, in streets and tram-cars, and above all in the tragic food queues, that everything was lost, and that the war should be ended at once. The Prime Minister had earned for himself the hatred of the whole people by his policy of Resistance. "Dr. Negrin's Resistance Pills" was the half-tragic and half-comic name given to the few lentils which were the only food of that heroic civil population. In the queues in which food was exchanged, one often heard: "I will change oil or soap for Dr. Negrin's Resistance Pills.")

This was our Manifesto:

*Spanish Workers, People of Anti-Fascist Spain—*

*The moment has come in which we must proclaim to the four winds the truth of the situation in which we find ourselves. As revolutionaries, as proletarians, as Spaniards, and as anti-*

*Fascists, we cannot continue passively to accept any longer the improvidence, the lack of foresight and organisation, and the absurd lethargy shown by the Government of Dr. Negrin. These critical times through which we are passing, and the climax which is approaching, impel us to end the silence and uncertainty which have increased our mistrust in that handful of men who still claim the title of government, but in whom nobody believes and nobody trusts.*

*Several weeks have passed since the war in Catalonia ended with general desertion. All the promises which were made to the people in most solemn moments were forgotten, all duties ignored, all their undertakings trampled under foot. While the people were sacrificing several thousands of their best sons in the bloody arena of battle, the men who had put themselves to the fore in demanding resistance deserted their posts and sought a means of saving their lives even at the cost of their dignity, by the most shameful flight.*

*This must not happen again in the rest of anti-Fascist Spain. We cannot tolerate that while the people are expected to keep up mortal resistance, their leaders should be preparing for a comfortable and lucrative flight. We cannot permit that while the people struggle, fight and die, a few privileged persons should continue their life abroad.*

*To prevent this, to remove the memory of that shame, to avoid desertion at the gravest moments, the National Council of Defence has been formed, and to-day, taking full responsibility for the importance of our mission, with absolute certainty of our past, present and future loyalty, in the name of the National Council of Defence which has picked up authority from where Dr. Negrin's Government threw it away, we address all Workers, all*

*Anti-Fascists and all Spaniards. Facing the duties which are incumbent upon everyone, we guarantee that nobody, absolutely nobody, shall be able to refuse these duties or evade by any trickery the responsibility of his word and his promises.*

*Constitutionally, the authority of Dr. Negrin's Government is without any lawful basis; in practice it lacks also any sort of confidence or good sense, and the spirit of sacrifice which should be required of those who want to rule the destinies of a people as heroic and self-denying as the Spanish people.*

*In these circumstances, Dr. Negrin and his Ministers have no authority for keeping themselves in power. We affirm our own authority as honest and sincere defenders of the Spanish people, as men who are determined to give their own lives as guarantee, and to make their destiny that of all the rest, so that nobody shall escape the sacred duties which are incumbent upon all alike.*

*We have not come with fine words, we have not come to play at heroism. We have come to show the way which may avoid disaster, and follow that way with all the rest of the Spanish people, whatever the consequences may be.*

*We give our assurance that we will not desert or tolerate desertion. We give our assurance that not one of the men who ought to remain in Spain shall leave Spain until all who wish to leave shall leave on their own accord.*

*We oppose the policy of resistance, to save our cause from ending in mockery or vengeance. For this, we ask for the support of all Spaniards and for this we give our assurance that nobody, absolutely nobody, shall escape the fulfilment of his duties. "Either we all are all saved, or we all go under," Dr. Negrin said, and the National Council of Defence has given itself as its*

*first and last, as its only task, the conversion of these words into reality. For that, we entreat your help. For that, we demand your assistance and we will show ourselves inexorable towards those who try to evade their duties.*

When the reading of this manifesto was finished, Señor Besteiro and Col. Casado, representing the National Council of Defence, made the following speeches to the whole country:

*Don Julian Besteiro's speech:*

"Spanish Citizens: After a long and painful silence I find myself to-day obliged by my conscience to speak to you from a Madrid microphone. The time has arrived to speak the truth, and remove the nets of lies which have been thrown round you. It is an unavoidable necessity, a duty to humanity, and it is exacted by the supreme law of the salvation of the mass of innocent and ordinary people.

"What is the real truth about present-day life in the Republic? To some extent, you know it. To some extent, you suspect it, or have presentiments about it. Perhaps many of you, at any rate to some extent, are ignorant of it.

"To-day this truth, however bitter it may be, must not only be recognised, but loudly proclaimed, to avoid greater evils, and so that our public behaviour may show all the self-denial and validity that the circumstances demand.

"The truth is, citizens, that since the battle of the Ebro

the Nationalist armies have occupied the whole of Catalonia, and the Republican Government, for some time, has wandered about in French territory. The truth is that when Republican Ministers shall decide to return to Spanish territory, they will lack all legal support and all the moral prestige necessary to solve the serious problems which confront them.

"The Presidency of the Republic has been cut short by the absence, or even the resignation, of the President. Constitutionally, the President of Congress cannot take the place of the President who has resigned, except with the strict obligation of arranging presidential elections within eight days. As this is impossible in the present circumstances, the Government of Señor Negrin, without Presidential authority and the support of Parliament (to which it would be vain to try and give an appearance of life) is without any legitimacy, and has no claim on the respect or recognition of republicans.

"Does that mean that Republican territory is in a state of disorder? No. The Government of Señor Negrin, when it still had some sort of legality, declared Martial Law, and to-day, as the high offices of the Republic have been destroyed, the Army of the Republic has unquestionable authority, and the course of events has placed in its hands the solution of a very serious problem of an essentially military nature.

"Does this mean that the Army of the Republic is without the support of civil opinion? By no means. Here, round me in this very room, are representatives of the

Republican Left Wing, of the Socialist Party, of the U.G.T., of the Libertarian Movement. All these representatives, like me, mean to give the necessary support to the legitimate power of the Republican Army in these solemn times.

"The Government of Señor Negrin, with its concealment of the truth, its half-truths and its captious schemes, could only hope to gain time, time which is lost in the interests of the mass of citizens, fighting or non-combatant. And this policy of procrastination could have no other end than to support the morbid belief that complications in international life might cause a catastrophe of universal proportions, in which, with us, the proletarian masses of many of the world's nations would perish.

"Republican opinion is sated with this fanatical and catastrophic policy, with this submission to foreign orders, with this complete indifference to the sufferings of our nation. I am speaking to you from this city of Madrid which has known how to suffer and still knows how to suffer its martyrdom with simple dignity. I am speaking to you from this 'breakwater of all Spain', as wrote the immortal poet whom we have lost, perhaps abandoned in foreign lands. I am speaking to tell you that when one is losing it is the time to show, individually and collectively, the moral value one possesses.

"We may lose, but honourably and decently if the end comes without disgrace.

"I tell you that a moral victory of this kind is worth a dozen material victories achieved by mis-rule and lies,



and I ask you, putting into my petition all the emphasis of my responsibility, that in these grave moments you support, as we ourselves support, the legitimate power of the Republic, which for the time being is no other than the power of the Army."

*Col. Casado's speech:*

"Spaniards out there in the Trenches: Once more I am speaking to you from Madrid, centre of the war, capital of the fatherland, mirror of Spanish virtues. I am thinking little of the differences and ambitions which separate us, but a great deal of the misery which we suffer equally, and the love, which I cannot believe has died in you, for this native soil, which for thirty-one months we have been covering with ruins and blood.

"I am what I always was, and I am where I have always been—a soldier, who never meant to rule his people, but to serve them on every occasion, because I believe that the army is not the brain of public life, but its right arm. I swore loyalty to one flag, and I am still loyal to it. I undertook to fight for the liberty and independence of the people, and to defend these will be my greatest pride.

"Since that cursed day on which the war started, I, like all the soldiers who did not rebel against the regime which existed pacifically and legally in Spain, have had to abjure nothing, nor have I needed to renew a promise of loyalty. I have simply done my duty. And without any right except that, the right which I have earned by duty done, I speak to you, compatriots, with Spain's misery in my

heart, and her name clean on my lips, to tell you that the people have had courage and gallantry enough to seek amidst the horrors of war the way of Peace, by means of the consolidation of independence and liberty. These two essential motives of the defensive war which the Republic is fighting are the ideals which inspire the people here and in the trenches, as we have so often proclaimed as roundly and as decisively as now. We do not fight for anything beyond our will and our interest as Spaniards. We want a country free of foreign domination, free of all submission to imperialist ambitions which will once more devastate Europe, a country capable of ruling itself with true liberty. There is no room for any policy, except a clear following of this one supreme sentiment which defends the uninvaded part of Spain, until the moment of independence arrives, with security and liberty.

"High words these, which by supreme command inspire the political parties and the workers' organisations in this zone; high words, compatriots, which are also spoken to you, and whether you like it or not, oblige you by force of conscience, as they oblige Spaniards on the fronts.

"Thus the phrase, 'Either we are all saved or we go under together,' with which we have expressed the dilemma that faces us, and with which we face the people, does not effect only us, but binds you equally. Our luck is out, and it depends on ourselves to come out of this difficult situation by common will, and common resolution.

"Choose, Spaniards in the invaded zone, between

foreigners and compatriots, between fruitful liberty and ruinous slavery, between peace in Spain, or war under imperialist colours.

"In our zone there are no foreigners. So that the nature of our fight could not be in doubt, we have refused even the help which certain men in different countries wished to give us, without any State intervention. There are only Spaniards in our Army. Turn back to patriotic interests, look once more at Spain. That is what is important to us as a basis for any aspiration we may feel. We shall not cease fighting till you assure us of the independence of Spain. The Spanish people will not lay down their arms whilst it has no guarantee of peace without crime. It is not I who am speaking to you. This is said to you by a million men mobilised for war, and people behind the lines for whom there are no frontiers or retreats, who mean to fight to the death to bring about these peaceful ends, to assure the independence of Spain, and to avoid that our country shall be merged in a sea of blood of hatred and persecution, which will make impossible for many generations a Spain united by anything but foreign denomination, violence and terror.

"The choice is in your hands to-day, not in ours. Peace, which is necessary for the recovery of Spain, or War, which is weakening her and putting her at the mercy of an invader. You must choose. If you offer us peace you will find our generous Spanish hearts. If you continue to make war, you will find our heroic fighting morale implacable, sharpened like the steel of our bayonets.

Either Peace for Spain, or a struggle to the death. We are ready for either decision, as independent and free Spaniards who have not the crime of destroying our fatherland on our conscience. Spaniards, long live the Republic! Long live Spain!"

As might be expected, as soon as the broadcast was finished, I was called to the telephone by the Prime Minister, Dr. Negrin, and we had the following most interesting conversation:

*Prime Minister:* General, I have just heard the manifesto which you have given out to the country, and I think what you have done is madness.

*Colonel Casado:* I am no more than a Colonel. I do not admit the promotion to General which you have given me, because it is no more legal than your Government. As to what has happened, and particularly as to my own conduct, I can feel perfectly at peace, because I have done my duty as a soldier and as a Spanish citizen. I must tell you that what has been done has the support of the whole people, whose rightful representatives are with me, and who are very pleased, because, like me, they are convinced that they have given Spain real service.

*Prime Minister:* I hope that you will reflect, because I understand that there is still time for us to make some arrangement.

*Colonel Casado:* I do not understand what you mean. I

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believe that everything is arranged as the people wish.

*Prime Minister:* At least, I must ask you to send a representative so that I may hand over the powers of Government, or I will send one to Madrid with these powers.

*Colonel Casado:* Don't worry about that. You can't hand over what you haven't got. Actually, I am taking up the powers which you and your Government have abandoned.

*Prime Minister:* Then you will not accede to that request?

*Colonel Casado:* No.

It is possible that all sorts of interpretations may be put on my conduct in refusing to have these powers handed over. My refusal had one powerful reason. It meant taking over something which would appear onerous, but which was already in fact quite superficial. I did not in the least wish to take over administrative powers, because then the National Council of Defence would be to-day, in spite of its complete honesty, subject to the penal code. They were trying to include the National Council of Defence in the story of the National Union Government's administrative orgies. Its members have their black page in history and some of them their police records. Up to the present they are able to move about and give their own opinions and lie, with the incomprehensible but humane help which the money of Spain gives to them.

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When this telephone conversation with Dr. Negrin was finished, I called General Miaja, telling him to come to Madrid to be President of the Council, since he was Commander-in-Chief of our forces on Land, Sea and Air. (The refusal of Señor Besteiro and my determination to avoid being given the title of Dictator, were reasons which made me do as I did. Did it do some harm? I am sure that it did not. I don't think that General Miaja was any obstacle to any action of the Council.) The General told me that early on the morning of the 5th he would be in Madrid to take up the position of President so that the National Council of Defence would be constituted as follows:

President	General Miaja	(No Political Party)
Councillor for	Colonel Casado	(No Political Party)
National Defence		
Councillor of State	Besteiro	(No Political Party)
Home Secretary	W. Carrillo	(Socialist Party)
Exchequer	Gonzalez Marin	(C.N.T.)
Councillor for	M. San Andres	(Republican Left
Justice		Wing)
Councillor for	J. del Rio	(Republican Union)
Education		
Councillor for	E. Val	(C.N.T.)
Communications		
Councillor for	A. Perez	(U.G.T.)
Labour		

From the constitution of this Council, in which were representatives of all the political parties (except that there were practically no Syndicalist representatives and no Communists at all), one could see that there was no question of an army rising, such as have brought such trouble in past centuries to our country, but a movement of the people to free themselves from a hated Government. It must be remembered that those who took part in the Council, as representatives of the various parties and syndicates, did not do so by their own initiative, but after consulting with, and receiving the full approbation of, their fellows.

There was no President of the Republic who constitutionally had the right and the duty to remove his confidence from a Government which the people had repudiated, and on that account there was no remedy but to exercise the common right to remove power from a Government which ignored the people's will, and substitute for it an organisation of direct representation which had popular feeling in its favour. This without disrespect for the fundamental laws of the State. It could be objected that some part of the Cabinet still existed, but one must reply to this that there was no Parliament, and that its last meeting on February 1st at Figueras had been one of the many theatrical spectacles of buffoonery and indecency which politics have presented to us since the world began.

I believed that Dr. Negrin would be convinced that all relations between us had been broken, since my reply to

his proposal about handing over the powers of Government had been categorical. But nothing could have been further from the truth. At about one o'clock in the morning I received telephone calls, one after another, from the Minister of Communications, the Minister of Government, the Sub-Secretary of the Army and the Chief of the Air Force, each of them trying in the Prime Minister's name to convince me that I ought to accept the handing over of these powers. I told all of them that the refusal which I had given Dr. Negrin was irrevocable and asked them not to insist, as it would be useless. (They wanted to hand me over a putrefying corpse—the powers of that Government.)

As I have already pointed out, the members of the Government were at Yuste because they were having a Cabinet meeting that day. But General Matallana was also there, and for him I had great personal regard. In spite of my warning he had gone to the appointment which Dr. Negrin had made with us and which neither General Miaja nor I would keep, because we believed that there was a plan for our arrest. With great anxiety I telephoned General Matallana and had the following conversation with him:

*Col. Casado:* How are you, General?

*Gen. Matallana:* Quite well.

*Col. Casado:* Have you heard everything?

*Gen. Matallana:* Yes, they have told me a certain amount.

*Col. Casado:* What do you think about it?



*Gen. Matallana:* I cannot answer you.

*Col. Casado:* *Un abrazo.*

*Gen. Matallana:* *Otro, muy fuerte.*

I was convinced by this conversation that General Matallana had been arrested in Yuste, so I at once called General Menendez, temporary Chief of Aggrouppment in General Matallana's absence.

General Menendez also wanted to speak to me on Dr. Negrin's account, and our telephone conversation was as follows:

*Gen. Menendez:* The Prime Minister has authorised me to approach you to arrange for the handing over of powers.

*Col. Casado:* Dr. Negrin has given the same authority to the Ministers Giner de los Rios and Gomez, to the Sub-Secretary of the Army and to the Chief of the Air Force and I have told all of them, as I am telling you, that I do not wish to have these powers handed over to me. On the other hand, I authorise you to tell Dr. Negrin that if before three hours General Matallana is not at his Headquarters, I shall shoot every member of the Government. (*As a matter of fact, before the time indicated, General Matallana telephoned me from his Headquarters, told me that he had taken up his Command again, and expressed his gratitude for my decision.*)

*Gen. Menendez:* Very well, I have simply carried out this

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charge of the Prime Minister's. I shall inform him what I have done and also what you say about General Matallana. You know very well that I am unconditionally at your orders and at those of the National Council of Defence.

*Col. Casado: Un abrazo.*

### 3

Among the many responsibilities and worries of this time, the most serious were the events in Cartagena and the mutiny of the Republican Navy. From information gathered later it would appear to have happened as follows:

On the 2nd of March, Admiral of the Fleet Miguel Buiza, summoned the Commanders of Ships, with the political Commissars, to a meeting, and had told them that a *coup d'état* against the Government of Dr. Negrin was imminent, and that a National Council of Defence would be formed, which would represent the Army and all the political parties and syndicalist organisations. None of those present made any kind of objection, from which it was concluded that there was uniformity of opinion about all that was being done, especially since the attitude of the crews towards Negrin's Government was well known.

However, a few hours later the Government heard exactly what was happening, and on the 3rd of March the

Minister Paulino Gomez, went to Cartagena, called together the Commanders and told them that the Government knew what the Navy meant to do, and was determined to take whatever measures were necessary to prevent it. On the following day, the 4th, the appointment was announced in the Official Journal of Lieut.-Col. Fransisco Galán, a leader of the Communist Party, to the command of the Naval Base at Cartagena. It was also announced that all Commanders who did not have the Government's confidence, and whom the Government considered compromised by the projected mutiny, were dismissed.

In view of the appointment of Lieut.-Col. Galán to the command of the Naval Base (an appointment which was received by the Navy with the greatest indignation), Admiral Buiza spoke with the authorities of the Naval Base and it was arranged that the command should not be handed over to the Lieut.-Colonel in question, but that the Fleet should go to sea thence to rebel against Negrin's Government and put itself at the disposition of the National Council of Defence which was being formed.

The officer commanding the Naval Base at Cartagena was General Carlos Bernal. This General assumed a passive attitude and did not seem inclined to oppose handing over the command as then arranged. Consequently, it was decided to put Captain Antonio Ramirez in charge of the Base.

But, contrary to what had been arranged, the command was handed over to Lieut.-Col. Galán a few hours later.

The Officers in Command, surprised by what had been done, kept their word to oppose the handing over. Therefore Col. Armentia of the Artillery and others came out into the street to protest, intending not to obey orders given them by the new Commander of the Base. The Falangist organisation in Cartagena, which undoubtedly knew what was happening, also took advantage of this moment of confusion to come out in the streets, and in a short time had called together a nucleus of Fascists, not only supporters of Franco, but also that great mass of undesirables who are always to be found following the winning side. In these circumstances Col. Armentia and the few men who followed him soon found themselves surrounded by a crowd of rebel civilians. At the same time, a Regiment of Marines rebelled. This state of things was taken advantage of by the Falangists, who took possession of the naval broadcasting station, sent out word of what was happening and asked for reinforcements from Cadiz to consolidate their position. They got possession of a great part of the town, including forts and batteries.

According to information which is in my hands, it does not appear true that Col. Armentia joined the Falangist rising. Quite sincerely, I do not believe it. This magnificent officer, whom I had had under me as Officer in Charge of Artillery when I took command of the Army in Andalusia a few months before this, was incapable of any act of disloyalty to the Republic, which he had defended with grand enthusiasm ever since its foundation. Probably this officer committed suicide when he realised

the position he was in, a position made more acute because the arrangement made by general consent of roundly opposing the handing over of the Naval Base to Lieut.-Col. Galán, had not been kept.

These events on shore started some confusion among the crews of the Navy, and soon increased their state of nervousness considerably, as was shown in the radio despatches which were shortly exchanged between the Admiral and other Commanders. At ten o'clock the Commissar of the torpedo boat *Ulloa* informed the Admiral that an observer had seen the Commander of the *Lepanto* giving instructions in company with a group of Falangists, who said they had taken over the naval broadcasting station. At 10.15 the Admiral, in view of the gravity of the situation and probably to calm everyone's nerves, sent out the following radio message:

*"By order of the Command. There is absolute normality here. Nothing is happening. The Fleet is at the orders of the Government."*

There is no doubt that the Naval Broadcasting Station was in the hands of the Nationalists, since at 10.50 the Commander of the torpedo boat *Ulloa* enquired by radio from the Admiralty if they had heard that radio station working with that of Cadiz, and giving a Nationalist broadcast direct to Republican soldiers.

The Admiralty at 10.56 sent out to all ships the following message:

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*"Complete calm. No special news except that a regiment of Marines has revolted."*

The Commander of the cruiser *Libertad* at 11.20 informed the High Command that a local radio transmission had just sent out a message which gave the ships of the Navy fifteen minutes to send up the white flag, threatening, to the contrary, to fire against them with the coastal batteries at Franco's orders. The Officer in Command of the *Libertad*, deliberately or not, increased the confusion and nervousness of the crews by sending this message, particularly since precisely at that moment Italian aeroplanes by coincidence bombed the Fleet, causing several deaths, principally in the *Gravina* and *Sanchez Baircaiztegui*, and damaging the destroyer *Lazaga*.

In view of these events the Admiral of the Fleet ordered at 12.10 that the second flotilla should put out to sea.

At 1.30 the following broadcast was received from Radio Bilbao:

"On Sunday, at 9.30, the Republican Broadcasting Station at Cartagena announced that a part of the Red Fleet had mutinied against the Government. This sensational news was followed by an invitation to the Civil population of Cartagena to join the rising immediately. From the wireless transmitter of Cartagena resounded afterwards the Falangist hymn and cries '*Arriba España!*' and '*Viva Franco!*' Later, broadcasts from the wireless station which was in

Nationalist hands said that part of the Republican Naval forces stationed in Cartagena had risen, taking possession rapidly of the greater part of the town, the forts, the coasts and the batteries on land. In the rising certain Nationalist aeroplanes took part, which at first were mistaken for Red Aeroplanes, so that they were fired on, but once the mistake was recognised the anti-aircraft fire was suspended before they suffered damage. In the principal square of Cartagena thousands of persons met, making enthusiastic comments on their liberation. Nationalist speeches were made which received enormous applause, and Nationalist songs and hymns were sung. Having received this news, a part of the Nationalist Navy which was in Cadiz set out for Cartagena, to support the rising. In Cadiz, as in the whole of Nationalist Spain, the brave coup at Cartagena had raised enormous enthusiasm. As yet it is not possible to know if the Nationalist ships will arrive in time to give effective help to the Nationalists who have risen.

*"Later, radio transmissions from Cartagena stated that the greater part of the place had remained Republican. The transmitter first stated that the detachments of the Nationalist Navy were concentrated in the Coastal forts and in the Arsenal, from which it appeared that they could not hold out in the city.*

*"The coastal artillery signalled to all Republican ships in the port that they should show the white flag*

within fifteen minutes, or that otherwise they would fire on them. It appeared that the Red Ships did not obey this, and some fled, according to the radio transmitter. In the Port, nearly the whole of the Red Fleet was concentrated, and among them the Cruisers *Libertad*, *Miguel de Cervantes*, torpedo destroyers *Churruca*, *Ulloa*, *Mende-Nunez*, *Alsedo*, *Antequera*, *Lepanto*, *Miranda*, *Valdes*, and *Alcala Galiano*, ten submarines and several auxiliary ships.

"In a counter-attack the Republicans re-captured the broadcasting station. At eleven-thirty it was already in their hands. At twelve-thirty the transmitter stated again that a struggle with bloodshed was continuing in Cartagena and the surrounding districts. Afterwards, it called to the Fleet to remain loyal to the Republicans."

This story sent out by Radio Bilbao represents a most tendentious account of what happened, since it states that the Navy rose against the Republican Government and let it be understood that they did so in favour of the Nationalists. Nothing could have been further from the truth. The Navy mutinied to put itself at the orders of the National Council of Defence which had been constituted that night. It is sufficient to read with detachment the story which I have just transcribed as given out by the Fascists' Radio, to realise that up to a certain point the audacious coup of the Nationalists prospered on account of the state of confusion which had



been growing on shore, but that after the first moments the Republican reaction of the civil population and the armed forces, easily stifled its intentions. Why did the Fleet put to sea? The radio despatches exchanged between their commands explain this quite clearly.

At one o'clock on the 5th of March, the commander of the *Libertad* asked the High Command if they had heard a speech from Radio Madrid, explaining the formation of a National Council of Defence presided over by Colonel Casado to take the place of Negrin's Government, to which the Admiral replied that he had been listening to something else. An hour later, the Commander of the *Libertad* insisted, and sent to the High Command, the following despatch:

"Union Radio, Madrid has sent out a speech by General Casado. Afterwards, Mera spoke, and strongly criticised Negrin. Immediately afterwards, a manifesto was read, announcing the constitution of a National Council of Defence presided over by Casado with the help of Besteiro, Wenceslao Carrillo and Cipriano Mera. In the manifesto, the people were told the truth about the war and that the Government of Negrin was guilty of treachery to them and had prepared its flight. The Left Wing Republicans, the Republican Union, the Socialist Party, the C.N.T., the U.G.T., and the Libertarian Youth Organisation have given their support to the National Council of Defence. The Communists are excluded. They

announced that they had constituted themselves above the Government, which, it would seem, has already resigned."

At 2.20 the Commander of the *Antequera*, told the Admiral and the Commissar of the Fleet that he wanted to confirm his absolute loyalty to their command, but having understood that a National Council of Defence had been formed in Madrid instead of Negrin's Government, and that it was made up of honourable soldiers and civilians, he thought they ought to give it their strongest assistance.

At 3.20 *Cabo Palos* said to Valencia: "By higher Order, transmit the following to the *Cervantes*, so that the Admiral may know. 'Come to Cartagena. Everything is calm in the Republic.'"

At 5.45 the Admiral of the Fleet sent out to all the ships, the following radio message: "New Government formed composed of General Casado, Besteiro, Val, Rodriguez Vega, San Andres, Carillo and Gonzalez Marin. Menendez and Matallana in accord with this. Long live the Republic." From this message it could be seen that the Admiral was unconditionally loyal to the National Council of Defence.

At six o'clock, the Commander of the *Ulloa* told the Admiral of the Fleet: "News received this morning from Madrid and Cartagena which you already know, I think obliges the Fleet to state its position in the present circumstances. I think it is necessary to reply to the urgent calls which Portman and Cabo de Palos are making to the

Fleet to get more precise information on the situation. The bombardment of yesterday on Cartagena has left the base, as your Excellency may have heard, without petrol. On this account, I think it is very necessary for everybody's sake to know your opinion."

At 6.25 the Admiral told the commander of the *Ulloa*: "Radio Message received at six o'clock from C.2. says: 'In Cartagena, at the orders of Franco.' This shows that the Base is not in the power of the Government of the Republic and in these circumstances, my opinion is that the Fleet ought not to return to Cartagena. With respect to the loyalty of the Fleet to the Government recently constituted, I must inform you that last Saturday, as you will remember, I was freed from my obligations. At daybreak, the Fleet will go to Argel. I authorise you to put forward any objections you may have to this. Reply to me at once."

At 6.25, the Commander of the Destroyer Flotilla who was aboard the *Ulloa* replied as follows: "Your radio received. Absolutely in agreement. Please accept my loyalty."

When the Admiral gave orders to the Fleet to sail for Argel, he received a communication from the Commander of the *Antequera* that it was his opinion that they should support the National Council of Defence, but the Commander of the Destroyer Flotilla answered him at seven o'clock that the Admiral's decision was helping the new Government in their mission, and that he hoped that his ship, like all ships of the Navy, would show their loyalty

and confidence in their Commander, and obey his orders in a disciplined way. As the Fleet sailed, the Admiral received a message, in which the French authorities told him to go to Bizerta.

What reasons had Admiral Buiza to free himself from his obligations? What caused this change of attitude? Possibly in his decision to leave national waters he was influenced by the General Commissar of the Navy, Bruno Alonso, who remained loyal to Negrin's Government. Were there some Communist Commanders who were opposed to the Fleet's coming out, keeping to their Resistance slogan? Information gathered from among them shows that none of them made any resistance nor influenced the mind of the Naval Chief to stay at his post, so that, when the time came, they could use their ships for taking out of Spain men who gave service to the cause of the Republic and who had been judged and sentenced to death. Such conduct would have meant no risk, since the Nationalist Movement in Cartagena had been totally stifled.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MILITARY REVOLT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

#### I

AFTER the reading of the Manifesto and the conversation which I had on the telephone with Negrin's house, I got into touch by telephone with the Army Corps Commanders who had Communist sympathies, and the following conversations took place:

*Col. Casado:* Listen, Barceló (*Barceló was Commander of the First Army Corps*). Have you heard what has happened?

*Lt.-Col. Barceló:* No, Colonel. I am in bed. I was up late last night.

*Col. Casado:* Very well, then; I'll tell you. I have risen against Negrin's Government and instituted a National Council of Defence, supported by Señor Besteiro and representatives of all the parties and syndicates except the Communist Party. I would like to know your attitude.

*Lt.-Col. Barceló:* Colonel, you know that I am unconditionally at your orders, both for the sake of my personal affection for you and because I have absolute faith in you.

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*Col. Casado:* Then prepare a Brigade of your reserves in case I need it.

*Lt.-Col. Barceló:* Certainly. At your service.

Next, I spoke to Lt.-Col. Bueno, in command of the 2nd Army Corps.

*Col. Casado:* Since you have heard what has happened, I should like to know if you are with the National Council of Defence or against it.

*Lt.-Col. Bueno:* I am a soldier who likes to fight at the front. I am no use for fights behind the lines.

*Col. Casado:* You must be concrete. I cannot allow evasions. With me, or against me?

*Lt.-Col. Bueno:* You know how much I like you, and admire you, but I am ill in bed, and can't move.

*Col. Casado:* I will send Lt.-Col. Zulueta to relieve you. Then you can take care of yourself.

*Lt.-Col. Bueno:* Don't send him. I'll manage somehow and be answerable to you for this part of the front.

*Col. Casado:* You will be answerable to me for everything, and I hope you will have the sense to shoot that gang which is with you, or commit suicide yourself. That is what an honourable soldier would do. (*From our conversation, I had gathered that he had no freedom of action and that he was being held in his headquarters by members of his party. Later, I learned that in fact these people were giving the orders, having got absolute control of the forces.*)

When this conversation was finished, I spoke with Colonel Ortega in command of the 3rd Army Corps.

*Col. Casado:* What do you think of what has happened?

*Col. Ortega:* I cannot pretend that it has not surprised me. I'm also surprised that you shouldn't have told me beforehand what you were thinking of doing.

*Col. Casado:* You should see that it would have been unpardonably stupid if I had given you information beforehand, since you are an active member of the Communist Party. Tell me categorically what your attitude is.

*Col. Ortega:* I must ask for time to think.

*Col. Casado:* Think, by all means. But do not act without my orders. I have the support of everyone who cares for Spain, and remember that anyone who tries to oppose the will of the people will be shot.

*Col. Ortega:* Very well, I will act in accordance with your orders.

I gathered from these conversations that I could not count on the 2nd and 3rd Army Corps, but that I could on the 1st and 4th (as we shall see later, I was deceived, since the 1st Army Corps mutinied and its Commander, Lieut.-Col. Barceló, was in charge of the revolt). What attitude did the Air Force, the Tanks and the Assault Guard adopt? At that moment I could not gather, although there was a possibility that they would rise against the National Council of Defence, since they were mostly Communists.

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What was the situation in the Armies of Levante, Extremadura and Andalusia? All their commanding officers put themselves unconditionally at my service, but I could not forget that in the Army of the Levante there were three Army Corps with three Communist Commanders, and in the Extremadura Army two reserve Divisions with the same. In the Andalusia Army nothing of the sort could happen, because the commands were either Socialist or of the C.N.T.

From what I have explained, it will be seen that the situation would be extremely unfavourable for me if the Commanders affiliated to the Communist Party obeyed their party's orders. As a matter of precaution against the possibility of a Communist rising, I ordered the occupation and defence of the centres of Communications, Government, and War Ministry, also, the broadcasting stations and the offices of the General Direction of Security. I reinforced my own headquarters also with a reserve of provisions and ammunition. The underground positions were a great worry to me, because the battalion in charge of them had a good many Communist officers and men, and there was a risk that they would blow up buildings. I ordered their relief by troops in whom one could feel absolute confidence. Lastly, I dismissed the officers in command of Transport and imprisoned the Officer in Command of the Air Base and the Chief of his General Staff.

On the morning of the 5th of March, the Inspector General of the Assault Guard, Colonel Armando Alvarez,



told me that he could be responsible for the absolute loyalty of all his forces, in spite of the fact that Communists predominated amongst them. In the same way, the head of the Air Force, General Hidalgo de Cisneros, assured me that the whole of the Air Force was ready to obey orders given it by the National Council of Defence. The promise which the Inspector General of the Assault Guard had given me was in itself a guarantee, because he was a really exceptional officer for reliability and energy. What the head of the Air Force told me, I accepted with some reserve, because although General Hidalgo de Cisneros was a great Spaniard, he was under obligations to Negrin and Moscow. In spite of everything, things began to pan out very much better for the military situation of the National Council of Defence.

In case the Communists should try to bring up forces and tanks from Extremadura and Levante against Madrid, I ordered all the roads from the Toledo front (Aranjuez) to the Guadalajara front (Gargoles de Abajo), to be watched by absolutely reliable forces with enough soldiers and plenty of armaments, so that they would have sufficient strength to prevent the arrival of reinforcements from the Southern Levante area. As a small detail I might mention that the road-controls established in Aranjuez, Ocaña and Villarejo de Salvanes, were in districts commanded by Colonel Ortega (3rd Army Corps). He did nothing to prevent them, probably because he did not know their object.

As I had foreseen, the Communist rising was not long in

coming. On the morning of the 5th, Major Ascanio, in command of the Eighth Division, rebelled, and with the forces which he held in reserve at El Pardo (twelve kilometres from Madrid) began to advance against the capital with tanks and artillery. Soldiers rebelled in Alcala de Henares, where they were in garrison, and took possession of this important town, as also of Torrejon de Ardoz. There was a plan drawn up which consisted in occupying Madrid, entering by the North and West. At the same time the Communist Party distributed cleverly written manifestos which made it appear that there was a state of confusion and doubt in Madrid and in the Army. This endangered the National Council of Defence. (The Communists as usual used lies and calumny to achieve their end.)

The advance of the Communist Units against Madrid was carried out relatively easily, since the small forces which I had under me just then (some 16,000 men) were spread out over the huge area which they had to cover. On the 7th, the fighting was very severe. The officer in command of the First Army Corps (Lt.-Col. Barceló) who had told me that he was "at my service," had been given the position of "Commander of the Negrin Government's Central Army," and naturally used all his reserves including some units from the front line, which left the front in some sectors at the mercy of the Nationalists. Using these soldiers they cut me off the telephone, and I was completely isolated for some hours.

That day the situation was extremely serious, since the

Communists had occupied the Ministries (a great building under construction at the end of the Paseo de la Castellana) and the Plazas of Manuel Becerra and Independencia, also Retiro Park, thus closing all entries to Madrid. They also occupied, after a stiff fight, the headquarters of the Central Army, which had three battalions to defend it, and they arrested the whole of the General Staff, among them, Colonels Perez Gazzolo, Fernandez Urbano and Otero, whom they afterwards assassinated in the most vile way.

But in the afternoon of that day, a column was marching on Madrid, formed by the Commander of the Fourth Army Corps (Lt.-Col. Mera of the C.N.T.) with strong forces sent by the Chief of Aggrouppment from Levante and Extremadura. A column of the 4th Army Corps commanded by Major Liberino Gonzalez (in command of the 12th Division) came up from Guadalajara, attacked Alcala de Henares, and in spite of the fact that three hundred soldiers had entrenched themselves in the solid building of the Lunatic Asylum, he succeeded in getting possession of that point in a very few hours and continued his advance on Torrejon de Ardoz, which also surrendered after some fighting. These forces continued by the main Aragon road to the banks of the river Jarama, where the enemy had taken up his position on the other bank and offered a stiff resistance. During the afternoon of that day there were several attempts to break the enemy line, but these were unsuccessful owing to the nature of the country and the natural defence which the river offered. But in

the end, on the morning of the 9th, after intense artillery preparation, the men of the 4th Army Corps managed to assault the enemy's positions, occupying the village of San Fernando, and thence continued fighting and advancing. During the evening of that day they attacked and reconquered the headquarters of the Central Army. At this the flight of the rebels was so precipitate that they left a 10.5 gun in the middle of the road with one of its wheels broken. During these days, the 7th, 8th and 9th, 30,000 prisoners were taken from among the rebels who had concentrated in the region of Alcala de Henares. Inside the capital the fighting was also very severe. The Assault Guards who gave constant proof of courage and discipline, reinforced with light artillery, held up the enemy's advance and took possession of the tanks with extraordinary ease. (The Central Army had ten tanks and twelve armoured cars and when the Communists had taken possession of these, they reinforced them with forty more which they had ready in secret without the knowledge of the command. The fact that this secret material existed was a proof of the intentions which the Communists had had for a long time.)

On the 10th the situation changed, since the arrival of strong reinforcements and the heroic behaviour of the Assault Guards and the 4th Army Corps put me in a position rapidly to overcome the rising. During that day and the following one we advanced with a strong column of men towards the Puerta del Sol, without meeting with much resistance, and with another from Canillejas

towards Ciudad Lineal. The first had some hours of hard fighting and some really difficult moments. It was surrounded by the enemy, who in a strong counter-attack reached its artillery positions. All the same, and thanks to their heroism, that evening the Plazas of Manuel Becerra and Independencia fell into our hands. The second column, helped by aeroplanes and artillery, made the Headquarters of the 2nd Army Corps surrender. That afternoon the first column attacked the Ministerios building, and after some hours of fighting during which artillery was used against the rebels, it surrendered.

The attitude of the civil population of Madrid towards these forces, is worth noticing. Whilst the Communists held the central positions of the City, the streets were completely deserted. Nobody dared to come out of his house, or even go out on his balcony. The moment the troops who were loyal to the National Council of Defence entered the city, the women gathered to cheer the soldiers and even gave them what small supplies they had, taking them coffee, biscuits, etc. Once more during the fighting the heroism of the Madrid people was seen. Witnesses who were present have told me of most stirring scenes that took place. For example, whilst the fighting was going on against the Ministerios Building, the people, most of them women and children, came and stood round the guns while they were actually being fired. There was one time when our men had to cease fire for fear of hurting people, in spite of the fact that the enemy strongly attacked our artillery with trench mortars. Five hundred

metres away from the scene of the fighting (and, as I have said, it was pretty severe fighting) people walked calmly along Castellana Street, many of them watching the effect of shots from our batteries. Sometimes there were actually people passing between the two camps so that one or another was obliged to stop firing for a time.

During the days 7th, 8th and 9th, the Communists arrested important men of other parties and syndicates, such as senior officers who were loyal to the National Council of Defence. Among them, I believe, was the Civil Governor of Madrid, Deputies, Councillors, newspaper editors, Commanders of Divisions or Brigades and a good many officers. Most of those arrested were in the Pardo Palace, and some in the Headquarters of the 2nd Army Corps. All of them were treated inconsiderately, some of them submitted to brutal treatment and others vilely assassinated, among the latter being Staff Colonels Joaquin Otero, Arnaldo Fernandez Urbano and José Perez Gazzolo. They carried their villainy to the point of burying alive two officers; the certificates of post mortems of these are in my hands. My children and my wife, who had moved when they saw the course of events, were soon found by the Communists, who surrounded the house, probably with the idea of taking them as hostages. When the news of this very delicate situation reached me I sent two tanks, in which, after running serious risks, they were taken out of the house and brought to the Chancellery of the Exchequer, where they remained until the end of the fighting.

As against this inhuman conduct of the Communists, the National Council of Defence gave irrefutable proof of the greatest magnanimity, since the Communist leaders and commanders who had been arrested by their orders were treated not only as political prisoners, but with every kind of consideration.

Colonel Ortega, whom I had relieved of his command of the 3rd Army Corps, offered himself to me as a mediator who might be able to make the Communists change their attitude. I informed the National Council of Defence of this proposal, and it was agreed that the said Colonel should be authorised privately, and should make whatever approaches he thought necessary. A few hours later he came to say that the Communist Party would drop its attitude if the Council would guarantee firstly the life of the rebels, secondly the publication of the Communist Press, and thirdly, one position in the National Council of Defence. By decision of the Council, the following note was given to Colonel Ortega to communicate to the Communist Party:

The Council will consider the fighting to be at an end on the following conditions:

1. The giving up of all arms, and all forces to return to the positions occupied on the day when the National Council of Defence was formed.
2. The handing over to the Council immediately of everyone of the military and civil persons arrested by the rebels.

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3. A promise on the part of the National Council of Defence to try offences without any kind of prejudice.
4. The substitution and relief of all commanders and commissars, in whatever way, and by whatever proceeding, the Council thinks best.
5. The National Council of Defence will set at liberty all arrested members of the Communist Party who have committed no crime.
6. The National Council of Defence, once this matter is settled, will agree to listen to members of the Communist Party.

General Headquarters, 12th March, 1939.

Councillor for National Defence.

Segismundo Casado.

The Communist Party replied to this in the following way:

“There has been fighting for six days in Madrid and the Communist Party thinks that to prolong the struggle would cause terrible harm to the country. For this reason it has decided to use its influence so that there shall be cessation of firing, remembering our supreme duty to unite all possible forces for the war against invaders, in view of the imminent enemy offensive on one or another of our fronts, and taking it into consideration that Negrin’s Government has found it best to leave Spain.

“The Communist Party, which has never for a moment done anything, or had intentions, which fall outside a political line that is sufficiently well-known and invariably



practised, declares that to-day, without the unity of our people, all resistance is impossible, and calls all sections to a positive and a fruitful accord in the interests of our independence and of our liberty.

"We are aware of the agreement reached by the National Council of Defence about conditions to be made for peace in which there shall be no reprisals. In these circumstances we do not only give up our resistance to the constituted authority but also, Communists both at the front and behind the lines, wherever they are working or fighting, will continue as they have done till now, giving to the country an example of self-sacrifice, heroism, and discipline, with their blood and with their lives.

"March 12th, 1939."

The two documents show a complete contrast between the behaviour of the National Council of Defence and that of the Communist Party. Whilst the Council did exactly what it promised, the Communist leaders continued working in Extremadura and Levante with the perverse idea of complicating the situation.

This document of the Communist Party speaks for itself. They thought that they ought to end the hostilities which they themselves had provoked, and they came to this conclusion when they had completely lost the struggle. They saw it was necessary to unite all forces against invasion, they themselves being those who had broken that unity, and who had left important sections of the front at the mercy of the Nationalists for six days.

Conesa, not only as leaders of the rebellion, but also because under their authority, or I should say under their command, all sorts of offences had been committed and assassinations done. When these sentences had been carried out, the Council authorised me to reduce the death sentences of the rest who were brought to trial. I took advantage of this, and no other death sentence was carried out.

Moreover, I gave strict orders that in case of an enemy attack, or breaking of the front, all arrested Communists should be taken to Valencia, before others.

It is certain that if the Communists had succeeded in overthrowing the Council, their sentences would have been much more severe.

As time passes, and I look back, I can see my conduct in avoiding bloodshed in this concrete case with some satisfaction. In the first place, because I was impelled to do it by my own spirit of humanity, in the second place, because I am convinced that Spain will not recover whilst those who rule her destinies are not convinced that every drop of blood which is spilt makes the material and spiritual reconstruction of the Spanish people more difficult.

When the fighting in Madrid was finally finished, the Communist attempts in the armies of Extremadura and Levante still had to be wound up. In Extremadura there were little centres of rebellion in Ciudad Real, Puertollano and Almaden which did not get very far owing to the calm and great tact of General Escobar, in command of that army.

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They pointed out the risk of an enemy offensive, an offensive which had been prepared for a month past, and of which they were well aware when they started fighting. They exhorted everyone to accord, when precisely, during this campaign, they were using every possible means of sowing discord and reducing the strength of other political parties and syndicates.

On the morning of the 12th, the rebel forces went back to their positions, and the principal commanders having taken flight, we then proceeded rapidly to relieve those Communist commanders and officers and commissars, who would not offer guarantees.

The Council, wishing to avoid bloodshed, tried to reduce the number of death sentences to a minimum. On this account I authorised Colonel Ortega to advise the leaders, commanders and Communist commissars who had been principally concerned, that they should get out of Spain as quickly as possible. Colonel Ortega told me that he had made this suggestion, and he thought it would be followed. Nevertheless, there were some who stayed in their positions until the last moment, and among them those most to blame, Lt.-Col. Barceló and Commissar Conesa.

Once the struggle was over, the Council, which had already discussed the point, met to consider the important problem of sentences. The general opinion was in favour of the greatest clemency, death sentences being reduced to an absolute minimum.

The Council approved death sentences for Barceló and

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In Levante, the prudence and cleverness of General Menendez avoided a rising which if it had come about would have had very serious consequences, because as I have previously said, three of the Army Corps which made up that great unit, were under Communist influences. The only thing that happened was the advance of a few tanks against Valencia, and that was easily checked.

Right up to the moment in which the zone was surrendered to the Nationalists, there was a possibility of risings in Extremadura and Levante, where Communist leaders remained hidden, and continued to give advice and orders which, fortunately, were not listened to or obeyed by anybody.

## 2

Comments were made at the time, and are still being made, about the opportunity taken for the *coup d'état*. There is a very general opinion that it was done too late. Nothing could be further from the truth and I feel sure that for our success we have to thank the fact that we seized the opportune moment.

The slogan of Resistance kept up by Dr. Negrin, produced a state of unrest amongst the civil population, an unrest which began to trouble me very seriously. On the other hand, representatives of political parties and syndicates, and commanders who were under me (except for a few who owed allegiance to the Communist Party)

frequently told me that it was necessary to end the War, as the civil population had lost its morale and the forces had no fighting capacity to hold up the great offensive which the enemy had prepared. For many days I was resisting strong pressure to bring the rising against Negrin's Government into immediate effect.

I was convinced of its urgent necessity, but I advised everyone to have patience, since many of them appeared to me like spectators at a bull fight, encouraging the matador to kill his beast.

What reasons had I for putting off the *coup d'état*? Partly because I wanted to respect as far as possible the constitutional formalities. I was convinced that the Prime Ministry had ceased to exist when the Presidents of the Republic and of Parliament had gone to live in France. I still hoped that both Presidents, in view of events, would come quickly to Spain, to save the machine of Government and to avoid a situation which would probably be catastrophic. To facilitate their return I conferred with the two men most representative of the Republic Left Wing (one of them the Deputy Regulo Martinez) and we arranged that they should go to Paris—I think it was on the 24th of February—to take a message to Señor Azaña, inviting him to come to Spain, remove his confidence from Negrin's Government, and form another of Republicans and Socialists. I told these men that they could give the President the assurance that I (who had once commanded his Escort), would guarantee his life if he came to Madrid. I arranged for an aeroplane for these gentlemen,

and I was quite calm, because I did not suppose that Señor Azaña would hesitate to do what seemed to be his duty. His refusal disappointed me, because the man who had used persuasive words to show the people the way to liberty was not capable, when he saw it threatened by so many misfortunes and dangers, of running a small risk to try and save it. I take advantage of this occasion to advise the people that they should use the tragic experience acquired throughout this war, that they should show some reserve towards the political campaign of those till now called public men, and should look towards more modest men who understand the people's wish for political and social betterment, and know how to satisfy it. I have the impression that in the future public men who are fogged by their own oratory, and afraid to act for the benefit of the people and the country, will find the people disillusioned and free from all ingenuousness.

The President of the Republic having failed, there was still a possibility that the President of Parliament might come to Spain as Head of the State. Not only the Prime Minister, but certain Ministers were sure that Señor Martínez Barrio would come soon; but as time passed, and Señor Martínez Barrio did not arrive, it was not possible to wait for him any longer.

On the 4th of March the whole machine of Government had nothing legal about it, since all Constitutional authorities had disappeared. Negrin's Government found itself in a very contemptible position because it could no longer justify its pretensions to legality. Dr. Negrin knew

perfectly well that he was unpopular and on that account encouraged and precipitated the abortive Communist *coup d'état*.

Consequently, the only thing which had any kind of legality in these tragic moments was military authority, in view of the faculties delegated to it by the declaration of Martial Law. To this it might be objected that I was not exactly the one to direct the rising against Negrin's Government, but I can answer with absolute sincerity that I was sure of my own powers of decision, but not of those of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and it was not a moment to vacillate.

I have said enough to justify the postponement of what we did, but I ought not to omit one or two other reasons. In order to achieve anything as important as this was, it is an elementary measure of precaution to estimate the strength of forces for and against one, and on this occasion the calculation produced very serious difficulties.

The political parties and syndicalist organisations offered me their unconditional support, but it was not possible to calculate the strength of this support since I ought to confess that there was a good deal of indecision and pre-occupation with the probable reactions of the Communist Party, a party which, to a certain extent, had the centres of authority in its hands.

The Communist Party, accustomed since the beginning of the War to imposing its own opinions, would probably adopt a rebellious attitude, and remembering that more than seventy per cent of the military commands of the

great units were held by members of that party it was impossible to predict what would happen to the National Council of Defence if there was a fight, because the Communists would be stronger in actual numbers if all these commands obeyed the orders of their political leaders.

Also most of the members of the Political Bureau of the Party (Pasionaria, Dieguez, Checa, Montiel, etc.) had been living in Madrid for more than a month, and ever since their arrival there had been showing extraordinary activity, with the help of Jesus Hernandez, Commissar Inspector of Armies, one of the men who, by his inconsequent behaviour, did most harm to our cause in the War.

The Political Bureau took the precaution of circulating a notice among officers in all ranks who were members of the Party, in which the following enquiries among others were made:

Are you ready, Comrade, to sacrifice yourself for the Party and to arrange that its appointed tasks shall be carried on in the unit under your command?

If occasion arose, which orders would you obey, those of the Party or those of your superior officers?

One of these papers is in my hands, with a reply from a Captain in the Assault Guard, which was taken from the table beside his bed by an orderly. This Captain replied that as he owed everything to the Party, he was ready to obey whatever orders it should give, even at the cost of his own life.



It is quite worth noting the importance of such a circular, and the perversity of the party leaders who constantly raised the cry of "discipline and obedience" in their press and at their hysterical meetings. This was one of their many illicit acts. They were not satisfied with destroying confidence and creating suspicion among men who were fighting for the same cause, but also undermined military discipline, the firm basis on which must rest the efficacy of any army.

Before the *coup d'état* I had spent many hours trying to take the measure of the forces which when the time came would be loyal, and those which would be against me.

*Central Army.* Organically, it was composed of four army corps, each one having between forty and fifty thousand men. These army corps were commanded, one by Lt.-Col. Mera of the C.N.T., and the other three by Col. Ortega, Lt.-Col. Bueno and Lt.-Col. Barceló, all three belonging to the Communist Party.

Because I think it is interesting in order to view the course of events with better judgment, I shall present these four persons:

*Lt.-Col. Barceló,* in command of the 1st Army Corps. In his conversation with me and at certain meetings of officers over which I presided, he stated that duty was his criterion, and that he would never allow suggestions, and certainly not coercion, of a political kind. He always showed great regard for me, and on more than one occasion he told me

of his gratitude, because he said that I was the only Commander who treated him with any sort of consideration. I have an idea that this officer was not at heart a Communist. Probably, his excessive ambition drew him into the activities of the Communist camp.

*Lt.-Col. Bueno*, commanded the 2nd Army Corps. During the time I had him under me this officer had a real will to work, and a wish to be absolutely loyal, but he was dominated by the Communist Party to which he belonged. When war broke out he had retired, and shortly afterwards he was imprisoned because he was declared to be disloyal to the regime. Set at liberty, he was catechised by the Communist Party who guaranteed his life if he would accept membership of the same. The fact that he had been in this trouble had brought him to his present situation, for he became a slave of the party which he had joined.

*Col. Ortega*, Commander of the 3rd Army Corps, was a thorough member of the Communist Party. His political history showed him to be a fervent Republican. At the outbreak of the revolutionary movement he showed intense activity in the Guipuzcoa region where he was an officer in the Gunners. After the fall of San Sebastian, he went to France, and returned to Spain by Catalonia, joining the Central Army. He was in command of some forces in the defence of Madrid in the tragic days of November 1936. He joined the Communist Party since

this party, by means of propaganda, photographs, articles, interviews, etc. had gone about making him a legendary figure, with a high position in the People's Army. The Party had discovered in the then Lt.-Col. Ortega a most promising man for the work of carrying out its plan within the Army. He was a man who liked show; he allowed himself to be led by the Party's propaganda and completely lost his head. Good at heart, he suffered from poisoning by calculated adulation and gave himself up completely to the Party, ready to obey its orders if his superior officers did not prevent him.

*Cipriano Mera*, a strong member of the C.N.T., commanded the 4th Army Corps. This officer, with anarchist sympathies, had the great merits of love of discipline and loyalty to Spain. He was the best-disciplined officer I had in my service. He spoke the truth, however hard it might be, and more than once, at meetings of staff officers of the Army over which I presided, I have been stirred to hear him point out the bitter truth about the War, the vices and virtues of the People's Army, and, during the last month, the need to end the War decently and honourably, because, like me, he knew that all resistance was useless and that it was impossible to avoid a victory for the Nationalists.

In order to calculate the possible forces "for" and "against," one had to take into account, besides the four army corps, the General Commands of Artillery and

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Engineers, the Assault Guards, the Air Force, Tank Corps, Communications and Transports. As an analysis of these organisms, commands and troops, I came to the following conclusion; that the Artillery was on the side of the National Council of Defence and all the rest were in favour of the Communist Party.

To sum up, so far as the Central Army was concerned. In the event of the Communist officers obeying the orders of their Party (orders which they considered as given by the Government of the National Union) the National Council of Defence would have only about 50,000 men and the others 150,000, with the extra disadvantage that the National Council of Defence would have against it, such vital forces as the Tanks, Air Force, Communications and Transports. From this estimate of the forces it may be seen quite plainly that if the Communist Party rebelled, the National Council of Defence would have to cope with a very unfavourable situation. If it were necessary, could it count on the help of the other armies to improve the situation in the city, should a struggle come?

It could count on the absolute loyalty of General Matallana and also of Generals Menendez and Escobar of the Levante and Extremadura armies. That would have been all right, but the personal loyalty of these commanders was not sufficient, since I did not know up to what point they could avoid rebellion among certain Commanders of Army Corps under them.

General Matallana had put the 17th Army Corps at my orders to reinforce the Cuenca Front, where

there were important enemy concentrations. The officer in command of this army corps, Colonel Garcia Vallejo, was unconditionally at my service, but of the three divisions which made up his unit, two were entirely Communist. Although there was some guarantee provided by the energy and exceptional gifts of this officer, it was impossible to foresee whether or not his forces could be used to support the National Council of Defence.

As for the Levante Army, its Commander did not conceal that he was worried by the possible line which might be taken by the officers commanding three of his army corps, who were affiliated to the Communist Party.

The Commander of the Extremadura Army was also in an unfavourable position, since his only reserves were made up of two divisions, commanded by Lt.-Col. Toral, who was also a Communist.

There is no reason why I should not admit that I was worried also, and understood that if these forces obeyed their party's orders, either in their present positions or in concentrating on Madrid, they would break up the forces in favour of the National Council of Defence.

Moreover, I was extremely concerned at the Communist predominance in the Commissariat of the Central Army. This organism had as its Supreme Chief, Jesus Hernandez, who, with the consent of the Prime Minister, had taken on himself all sorts of rights. Working according to his views Commissar Inspector Jesus Hernandez

had brought in a good deal of Communist personnel to his Commissariat, a dangerous manoeuvre which I had had to suffer in the Central Army, because my complaints to superiors had been ignored. This fact also reduced the possibilities of success for our *coup d'état*.

Nor could one ignore the possible reaction of the civil population to a clash between their own forces. More than a million people, who were starving and wanted peace, and who at the same time were afraid of the great enemy offensive, were capable of anything to show their despair.

But as if I had not preoccupations enough, the thing was going to happen in the face of an enemy who held an opposing line with two hundred thousand men and three hundred thousand reserves, all prepared for several days past to begin a violent offensive, determined to take the capital of the Republic.

Plenty of commanding officers have found themselves in difficult situations, and situations of great responsibility, but I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that my responsibility would have reached the maximum possible if, during the days of our struggle with the Communist Party, the enemy had attacked.

However, conscious of my responsibility to history, of the great difficulties in the way of obtaining what I meant to obtain, I did not vacillate. The people wanted Peace, and it was necessary to do what the people wanted. That is the mission of the Army—to do the people's

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will, removing any obstacle which opposes it. In this case it was the unpopular Government of Dr. Negrin, which was obeying foreign powers.

## CHAPTER VI

### PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

MUCH has been written, and much is still being written about the peace negotiations between the National Council of Defence and General Franco.

Dr. Negrin and the Spanish Communist Party have circulated stories which try to prove that the National Council of Defence was persuaded by me to hand over our zone to Franco. According to them, I had a complete understanding with the Nationalist Government and the French and British Governments. In fact they have tried to make me appear in the eyes of Spain and the democratic world as a traitor to my country and to the Republic.

Fortunately, the keen insight of the Spanish people has taught them how much to believe from Dr. Negrin and his followers, so that this abominable campaign has not succeeded in Spain. But in other countries they have so confused the facts that what happened must be cleared up by a concise and concrete account.

These people have tried to make me appear a traitor because they saw that this would be the easiest way to get out of their own responsibility, and also because



it will further the plan through which they hope one day to return to Spain and rule the destinies of the people.

I happened to be the executive arm, as it were, of the people of anti-Fascist Spain, so that by force of circumstances I had been removed from the modest level on which I had always lived. It is round me, therefore, that their propaganda chiefly circulates. They have not the courage to say in their libellous stories that the representatives of the political parties and syndicalist organisations in the National Council of Defence were traitors to the public. Or perhaps to say that would rob their campaign of its efficacy. So that they content themselves with making out that I and Señor Besteiro were traitors, while they depict the rest of the Council as innocents who allowed themselves to be deceived. What do they hope to get by that? They somewhat ingenuously hope that the members of the National Council of Defence, Republicans, Socialists and Anarchists, will lose standing in the eyes of the people, so that one day the syndicalist organisations and political parties will be in the hands of Communists, who during and after the war betrayed the other organisations and parties by putting themselves in the service of Russia. That is all.

Dr. Negrin is a pathological case. Dr. Negrin has not realised, or has not wished to realise, the irreparable harm which he has done to Spain, and of which the Spanish people are perfectly aware. Dr. Negrin, who has lived, and still lives, in a world of unreality and self deception has

not realised that the ports of Spain will never again be open to one who showed such apparent indifference to the sufferings of the people. For, ignoring the stark reality, he tried to continue a suicidal war in accordance with the plans of the Soviet Government.

Perhaps Dr. Negrin also is unaware of the fact that during the war the people knew that whilst the young men of Spain were suffering every kind of privation and sacrifice, he was not sharing their hardships and sufferings.

Having said so much, I will pass on to deal with the peace negotiations which the National Council of Defence undertook.

In that last meeting of the High Military Commands, over which Dr. Negrin presided on February 27th, the latter, pressed by General Menendez to tell us about his negotiations for peace, said this:

"Since May 1938, I have been trying to get peace on honourable terms. I have used every possible means, including that of trying to get in to touch with the Nationalist Government through intermediaries who are men of importance on the other side, and who were in the Republican zone—among them, a relative of Señor Serrano Suñer. The results have been completely negative. Faced with that, and yet understanding the necessity of coming rapidly to terms, I suggested to Great Britain that she should intervene as a friendly power, and officially take up

such an important matter in an official way. But I was told there was no chance of success."

He said much the same thing in that last and most important interview which I had with him in Madrid on the 1st of March, 1939. At this interview, convinced as I was that the enemy would not discuss peace terms with the Negrin Government, and that the attempts of England and France could not be of much use because Germany would prevent them, I told him that I thought the only solution was direct discussion between the two armies, reminding him of the militarist nature of the Burgos Government. Moreover, I told him that I thought I was fairly respected in the enemy camp, in spite of my well-known republican and anti-Fascist sympathies, and that I would put myself at his disposition so that if negotiations were to be opened he could use my services. I remember that Dr. Negrin, on hearing this, looked at me with a surprised and disconcerted expression, and told me that he would remember my kind offer.

Dr. Negrin had lost all hope of starting peace negotiations and instead of making way for a Government which would be in a position to discuss the matter with the enemy, he was determined, or forced, to stick to his cry of resistance at all costs.

I shall never forget his sentence about the situation being very serious, but that he could not leave unless there was someone to make him resign. He told me this when I pointed out his great responsibilities.

He was so sceptical that he systematically refused contact with foreign representatives in Spain. During the whole period of his Government after his return from France it was very difficult to know where he was, since he moved about from one place to another from day to day, and often incognito. He was like someone hiding from justice. On February 25th, for instance, a member of the International Committee for the Exchange of Prisoners visited me at my headquarters. He had come to ask me if I knew anything about certain exchanges which were being carried out. I explained that I, as Commander of an Army, had no official status in such matters, and that therefore I could not help him. He agreed with me, but said that he had come to me because he had been looking for the Prime Minister for five days and had not been able to speak to him, although he had been to all his usual places of residence in Madrid, Valencia, Yuste, etc.

After the *coup d'état*, the National Council of Defence made the question of peace negotiations its first duty. It could not be otherwise, as this was the one mission which justified its whole existence.

Now to secure a decent and honourable peace it was necessary to strengthen the discipline and morale of the Army and to raise the civil population from the wretched state into which it had sunk as a result of the inexplicable loss of Catalonia. To do this we needed intelligently directed propaganda, and we had to suppress the hysterical cries, absurd slogans and the intolerable conduct of the Communist Party. But from its very first moment in

office, the Council set out to achieve this, because we were convinced that it was our only way to a decent and honourable peace.

But unfortunately our attempts to secure such a peace were opposed by the Communists. Their subversive attitude lasted seven days, and its ravages were so great that the National Council of Defence could not take up negotiations, with the ability to quote the power of resistance of the troops and civil population. The struggle between the Communist forces and those of the National Council of Defence caused our effectiveness to be weakened, caused sections of our front to be abandoned and remain for several days at the mercy of the Nationalists, and caused despair among the civil population, who, remaining in Madrid, had to suffer from the violence of the rebels, whom they considered responsible for what happened and what might happen.

The difficulties of the National Council of Defence and the problems which had arisen through our struggle with the Communists were such that we found ourselves forced to postpone our efforts for peace for a time. We were in a most precarious situation as a result of the material and moral ravages which the Communist revolt had produced.

However we did not lose time, since all the members of the National Council of Defence were conscious of the gravity of the situation. We unanimously believed that peace negotiations were urgent and indispensable. Therefore, even during the Communist revolt, we had two meetings at which we discussed the best way to carry out

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our purpose. After a long debate in an atmosphere of uncommon cordiality and understanding, we decided to draw up a document on the following basis:

1. To try to negotiate peace directly with the enemy, refusing the intervention of foreign powers as mediators.
2. To demand the following conditions as a minimum:  
Guarantee of National independence and integrity.  
Guarantee of expatriation for everybody who wants to leave the country.  
Guarantee against every kind of reprisal.
3. To appoint as representatives of the National Council of Defence for these negotiations, the Councillor for National Defence and the General in Command of Aggroupment.

From this document it will be quite clear that the Council asked for nothing which the enemy could rationally refuse, since in wireless broadcasts the Nationalist Government had repeatedly expressed itself as being in accordance with these.

The Nationalist Government could have no objection to guaranteeing the independence and integrity of Spain, since during the war it had shouted to the four winds that Spain was independent and free. It could not refuse to guarantee the expatriation of everyone who wished to leave Spain, first because it pays to help the retreat of an enemy in flight, and secondly because in its

broadcasts the Nationalist Government had claimed the best intentions in this respect. One could trust these intentions because the expatriation of its enemies would suit it both socially and politically, since the reconstruction of Spain could never be undertaken in an atmosphere of hatred and bloodshed.

It was not to be supposed that there would be no objection to the choice made of representatives for the National Council of Defence in peace negotiations, since these were military commanders of known responsibility, and since our choice had taken into account the military complexion of the Nationalist Government, and had cut out all political representatives.

In a meeting of the council which took place on the 9th, these points were approved and we authorised a document to be drawn up as follows:

"The National Council of Defence, living expression of Republican Spain, constituted to act rapidly and effectively to secure that peace which is so much desired by all Spaniards, has not been able to act until the present moment in this, its chief mission and the only reason for its existence, because certain Communist elements have carried on an armed rebellion against its authority, forcing it to take its attention from fundamental matters to keep public order.

"Fortunately the movement has been suppressed and has served to show once more that the Council has

the support of all those Spaniards whose sense of honour makes them put their hope of peace before everything.

"The moment has come then, to return to our mission and consequently to approach the Nationalist Government and present to them the principles which we consider essential for the laying down of arms, and ending the war, while at the same time recognising the facts of the situation. These principles are as follows:

"1. A categorical and final declaration of national sovereignty and integrity. We believe that the Nationalist Government will be as interested as we are in the confirmation of this principle, but we think a guarantee from them is necessary, for the spirits of everybody at home and abroad will be raised when they feel the certainty and reality of this.

"2. The security that all civilians and soldiers who have taken part honourably and cleanly, through their enthusiasm or through their ideals, in this hard and lengthy struggle, shall be treated with the greatest respect, both as persons and in the matter of their interests.

"3. A guarantee that there will be no reprisals and no sentences except those passed by competent tribunals for which every kind of proof will be necessary, including witnesses. To avoid mistakes it would be best to define and limit in a clear and final manner political and public crimes.



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"4. Respect for the lives and liberty of soldiers in the Militia, and of political Commissars who are not guilty of any criminal offence.

"5. Respect for the life, liberty and employment of professional soldiers who have not been guilty of crime.

"6. Respect for the life, liberty and interests of public officials on the same conditions.

"7. A concession of twenty-five days for the expatriation of all persons who wish to leave the country.

"8. That in the zone under litigation there shall be no Italian or Moorish troops.

"9. If this should be accepted by the Council, the Councillor for Defence and the General in Command of Aggrouppment shall be chosen to present it to the enemy.

"Madrid, March 11th, 1939."

From this document it can be seen that we recognised the tragic realities of those moments, and realised that it was necessary to drop all pretences of dignity and serve only the interest of the country and the Spanish people.

What did we expect from this document? We issued it to serve as the basis for discussion with the Nationalists, if these should be disposed to negotiate peace. In the preamble it was made clear that the Communist rising had been thoroughly suppressed. This declaration, made with

the greatest honesty and in conformity with what had actually happened, was a weapon which might be turned against us, since if the Nationalists considered that the defeat of Communism was their chief mission in Spain, and we declared that circumstances had made us help them in this, the very thing that they considered fundamental would run the risk of losing its value through what we had done, since it was obvious that if we had suppressed what they thought the greatest danger to Spain their political victory would suffer a severe blow, and consequently their military victory also.

If the principles in the document quoted are to be analysed one must take the following facts into consideration. Admittedly the Nationalist Government was perpetually talking about "one Spain, great and free," but we who knew the truth of the matter could not give much credit to these declarations. The bare-faced intervention of Italy, and the more discreet, but more dangerous, intervention of Germany, were no secrets, nor was the military appropriation by Italy and Germany of the Balearic and Canary Islands. Nor could it have been a secret from anybody that Germany and Italy are not a pair of romantically-minded nations who might be acting from idealistic motives, and that neither was economically in a position to be generous. We knew their intervention in Spain had as its principal objects to squeeze the udders of the Spanish people and at the same time indulge in a form of international speculation, in which Spain was being used to weigh the balance and threaten European

equilibrium. It might be objected that if we knew this was so we ought to have gone on fighting for National independence. Just so. For my own part, I declare that as we drew up the document, I knew for certain that Spain would be tied hand and foot to the Rome-Berlin axis. But I knew also that any attempt to prolong the war would have been a crime of *lèse patrie* and a useless waste of human life. I knew that the troops would not have mutinied if they were ordered to continue fighting, but that if through anything unforeseeable they *had* done so, Spain would have been made a heap of ruins, under the brutal rule of the totalitarian countries.

In the document we made certain requests with respect to the life, liberty and interests of all who had taken part in the War and had been guilty of no crime. I did not believe that the Nationalists would refuse such a just request, because I believed that the Nationalist Government would have enough political acumen to understand that this was the only way in which it could reach its stated objective—I mean the moral and material reconstruction of Spain. To do anything else, to punish those who had defended the Republic in obedience to an ideal or through a sense of duty, would lead inevitably to a state of rancour and latent rebellion, in preparation for catastrophic events, which would certainly come about when circumstances made it possible to avenge all those against whom unjust reprisals had been made.

The constant obsession of the Council was to obtain a guarantee for all who wished to leave. We did not ask for

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an amnesty for crimes of bloodshed, nor for what were called political crimes. We asked that all who feared punishment should be allowed to leave Spain. In making this petition the Council was as much interested in the salvation of Spain as in the liberation of men with criminal or political responsibilities. Their departure from Spain would open the way to conciliation and perhaps political and social harmony. To prevent their departure in order to punish them severely would be treason against the Spanish people, since it would mean that all hope of the reconstruction of Spain was lost.

Why did we ask for a guarantee to prevent reprisals? For the same reason. It certainly put the Nationalist Government in a difficult position, since there were many in its ranks who, whilst calling themselves Christians, had an insatiable thirst for vengeance, perhaps because their burnt-up Christian faith was not capable of being warmed by humanitarian sentiments. This, which might be a matter for reflection from the merely political and circumstantial point of view, became repulsive when it had the authority of a strong executive power which should be inspired by those high ideals which are necessary to serve the interests of the nation. It was frightening to think of the consequences which reprisals might have, because it is certain that the masses, when there is no authority over them nor any check to their actions, are capable of the most terrible extremes, and it is certain, too, that a few perverse citizens can bring about the greatest calamities. It would be ingenuous to believe that criminal instincts



are to be found only among the proletariat, since experience teaches us that the criminal instincts which are most to be feared are often behind the sword, the wig and the cassock. The difference is only in the form these instincts take. The masses act always on a savage impulse, without calculation or reflection, and often show their generosity. Calculated crime on the other hand is without that thoughtless impulse and, carried out with preconsideration, is quite inexcusable, making, as it does, cold and sinister premeditation its first quality.

As may be seen, we sought a practical solution, and though we knew all this in our secret hearts, we did not show it in the document mentioned, because that would have been too innocent. We knew that we were beaten, that we had not the slightest hope of help from the powers who should have helped us, and that we were trying to negotiate peace as a conquered people. Would it have been any use to have made the continuation of the Republic as the political regime of our country one of our conditions? Would it have been any use to ask for a plebiscite? Not the slightest. It would have been vain to suppose such things were possible, when we knew that it would be the winning side which would impose conditions, and when, moreover, we knew beforehand that Spain would be subjected to a special regime which would have the word of a few War Lords as its law, and would have to continue suffering foreign military intervention (though this was possible for a time only, and would give place to a strong and efficient economic intervention).

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The document was approved and signed unanimously on the 11th, and the Council agreed to make an official communication to the Nationalist Government concerning our wish to start negotiations.

Such an important matter was naturally carried on with the greatest secrecy, but someone, whose name I cannot give because I have not sufficient proofs, wishing to see the war finished, or to ingratiate himself with the enemy, brought the Council's project to the knowledge of the Nationalist leaders, who were living in Madrid. It must have happened like that, because on the afternoon of the 11th the head of Artillery Workshop Number Four asked to see me, to tell me of certain work about which I ought to know. I agreed to see him on the following morning, the 12th. From the Military Investigation Service I knew that a certain Señor Valdes was a refugee in an Embassy in Madrid, and from facts which I had about him I believed him to be a leader of the Falange in Madrid. I intended to get in touch with him, so that he could serve as an intermediary with the Nationalist Government, but I postponed this because on the morning of the 12th the solution came of its own accord. At 11 o'clock the Chief of Workshop Number Four was announced, and I received him. He was a certain Lieut.-Col. of the Artillery, Centaños, whom I had known many years ago when he had been a Professor at the Higher Army School whilst I was a pupil. I had always had the greatest admiration for him as a soldier and a citizen. He was accompanied by a young man whose

name I do not remember. He told me that he wished to consult me as to how he could obtain certain materials which he needed for making telemeters for the coastal batteries, a task which had been assigned to his department. I took a note, as one does knowing that nothing can be done but to please the person who has come with the request. When we had settled this he congratulated me on the Council's decision to negotiate peace. I felt I could trust this man, and besides we had already revealed our intention by radio, so I told him that the Council wished to finish the war without more bloodshed, as soon as possible.

Then this officer, whose face showed some nervousness, suddenly said without beating about the bush: "This gentleman who is with me, and I, are the representatives in Madrid of General Franco, and we put ourselves at your disposition in order to establish negotiations. I realise the fatefulness and the danger of the step I have just taken, and naturally accept the responsibility for it."

I am not in the habit of vacillating. Nevertheless, I must admit that this statement, so impulsive and unexpected, rather alarmed me. I reflected quickly, then made my decision. There were two alternatives—to order his arrest, or accept his offer. To arrest him would mean giving summary judgment and punishing the crime of High Treason to which both these men had confessed, with the additional offence in one case of being in charge of a military organisation. It seemed to me certain, however, that if I did this the general situation, which

was already serious, would become catastrophic, since the sentence on these two representatives would be avenged by the enemy by a violent offensive.

In war, and even more when the time comes to end war with an enemy who considers himself the victor, one has to use whatever will serve one's turn. The most useful thing on this occasion was to accept the offer of these representatives, and I told them that I should put their offer before the National Council of Defence and that they must come to my office on the following day, the 13th, to hear the result.

On the night of the 12th the Council met and I told the Councillors that I had had a visit from Nationalist representatives who had offered themselves as intermediaries between us and General Franco. I said that I did not consider it proper to decide the matter on my own account, because such a delicate situation ought to be resolved by the Council. After some deliberation it was unanimously decided that we should accept the proposal, and that on the following day I should receive the enemy's representatives and set about making negotiations.

On the morning of the 13th I had an interview with the representatives in question. I told them that the National Council of Defence had decided to use them as a medium to get in touch with the Nationalist Government and that the first thing that we should like them to communicate to Burgos was that the Councillor for National Defence and the General in Command of



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Aggrouppment had been chosen as our representatives in peace negotiations. I also told them, so that they should inform the Nationalist Government, that the National Council of Defence had agreed on a categorical refusal of all foreign intervention in negotiations, and as a basis on which these might be brought to a satisfactory ending had agreed that the Nationalist Government must guarantee national independence, the evacuation of all who wished to leave the country, and to make no reprisals.

The Nationalist representatives replied that they would communicate all this as quickly as possible to the Generalissimo and that as soon as they had his answer they would inform me. They told me that the Generalissimo would almost certainly accept the representatives chosen by the National Council of Defence, but at the same time they wished to point out that our representatives would have as their only mission to seek an accord with the Nationalists on the manner of surrendering our zone and the Republican Army, since the Generalissimo would demand its unconditional surrender, and this in a very short space of time. Otherwise, they said, not only would the offensive which he had ready against Madrid be begun, but also those which were prepared on other fronts.

Since I knew the opinion of the National Council of Defence, I told the Nationalist representatives that the Council would not agree to unconditional surrender, and that if they intended to be wholly intransigent we would

be forced to the unhappy alternative of continuing to fight, with all the tragic consequences of this. I told them that the Army was ready to fight to the end, and that owing to the enormous quantity of explosives there were in Madrid, the capital of the Republic might have to show the world a sight which could only be described as Dantesque, and that the responsibility for it would not be ours.

The enemy representatives understood these considerations and told me that although surrender would have to be made unconditionally, the Generalissimo would undertake to fulfil a programme of concessions outlined in a document which they handed to me. This was as follows:

*The Generalissimo's Concessions.*

1. Nationalist Spain will hold to the offers of free pardon which it has made in radio broadcasts and will be generous to all who have not committed crimes, and have been deceived into fighting.
2. For Senior Officers and Officers who voluntarily lay down their arms without being guilty of the death of their fellows or of other crimes, apart from being given their lives, benevolence shall be exercised in proportion to the significance and efficiency of the service which in the last moments of war they shall give to the cause of Spain, or in proportion to the smallness of their activity and their malice during the war.

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3. Those who surrender, avoiding useless sacrifices, and those who are not guilty of assassinations and other serious crimes, can have safe conduct which will put them outside our territory, enjoying meanwhile full personal security.
4. To Spaniards who rectify their lives abroad protection and help will be given.
5. It shall not be considered a crime merely to have served in the Red Army, nor to have been a militant member in the ranks of political movements opposed to the Nationalist movement.
6. The tribunals of justice will only be concerned with crimes committed during the period in which the Reds have ruled. The responsible civil authorities will be humane in their treatment of the families of those condemned.
7. Nobody shall be deprived of his liberty for criminal activities for longer than is necessary to effect his correction and re-education.
8. Any delay in surrender or useless resistance to our advance will be considered a cause of the gravest responsibility, which we shall weigh in the name of the blood uselessly spilt.

A rapid glance was enough to tell me that this document had been cunningly drawn up and that it would be necessary to ask for it to be clarified. The Nationalist representatives explained to me that the Generalissimo had the best intentions of avoiding bloodshed, and that

all the promises in this document would be rigorously complied with. As our conversation ended, I told them that they should acquaint me with the Generalissimo's decision with respect to our entering into conversations.

That night the Council met, and I told them the results of my interview and read them the document which gave the concessions of the Generalissimo. Naturally, its contents were scrupulously studied and there was an unanimity of opinion about it. We found it too dexterously drawn-up and unfavourable to us for the following reasons: In the first concession, it was stated that generosity would be shown to all who, without having committed crimes, had been deceived into fighting. From this could be gathered that there was no intention of generosity to those who had entered the fight deliberately. The way in which this concession was worded obliged us to think that the other concessions might be carried out in an arbitrary manner, and made to serve the political circumstances of the moment in which they were applied.

The second concession left all Senior Officers and Officers at the mercy of any accusation, and suggested that they should betray the Republican Army when it said "in proportion to the significance and efficiency of the service which in the last moments of war they shall give to the cause of Spain, or in proportion to the smallness of their activity and their malice during the war." The Council interpreted this as meaning that benevolence would be applied to a greater or lesser degree, but only towards those who during the war had managed to avoid

fighting (most of them cowards), or those who, in the last moments, served the interests of the Nationalists (most of them traitors).

In the fifth concession it was guaranteed that all those who had been simply in the ranks of political organisations opposed to the Nationalist movement would be exempt from responsibility. This concession took the efficacy from, or actually annulled, the second and third concessions, since it inferred that all who had not been private soldiers in the ranks of the army or militant members without office in the parties and organisations, would be held to be criminally responsible.

And lastly, in the eighth, there were serious responsibilities for those who opposed the Nationalist advance. One could see only too clearly that this document had been drawn up so cleverly that whilst conceding nothing, it would give a sense of confidence to all those who read it in good faith. The declarations made by the enemy's representatives and a study of the concessions offered by the Generalissimo, made me doubt whether any negotiations would be possible. However, I did not wish my scepticism to affect the other members of the Council, because we had to avoid depression or excitement, the consequences of which might have been fatal. In spite of my silence, I realised that the other members of the Council supposed, as I did, that General Franco would refuse conversations for peace.

The days which we spent waiting for General Franco's answer (from the 13th to 19th March) were a torture to

me. There was no time to lose, and in case the enemy should make more fighting inevitable, I worked out a plan of retreat for the Central Army which could be effected at the right moment. I kept this absolutely secret to avoid any demoralisation in the High Command or General Staff of that Army. I ought to note that if circumstances had forced me to make that retreat by the Tajo it would probably have meant complete demoralisation with tragic circumstances for Madrid, since among the revolutionary masses in the city there was much opinion in favour of burning down the whole capital.

At the same time I worked out, also in the greatest secrecy, a plan for evacuating the civil population, with the idea of gaining time and avoiding any repetition of the wild exodus from Catalonia. The method, organisation and execution of this important service was kept secret.

I formed a Central Board of Evacuation for this, presided over by the General in Command of Aggrouppment and made up of representatives of each of the political parties and syndicalist organisations. Under this Board, a Board was created for each one of the armies, presided over by the Commanders-in-Chief of these armies, with political and syndicalist representatives.

That these Boards might work better I made it incumbent on the political parties and syndicalist organisations to send secretly a list of those whom they considered ought to be expatriated. I gave the same instructions to the army Commanders with respect to their senior officers, officers and men. All requests were brought together at

Aggrouppment Headquarters in order to co-ordinate and regulate the evacuation.

I took this project to the Council, but at the suggestion of certain Councillors the putting of it into practice was delayed, since they believed that if militant members of parties and organisations knew that evacuation was prepared there was a possibility of dangerous demoralisation in the army, as well as among the people. Although I was not convinced of the need of this delay (an opinion in which other Councillors agreed with me), we decided to hold it up until the 26th, and the course that events had taken by then meant that the work of these Boards was useless.

Just when my concern over the delay in General Franco's answer was greatest, just when I had lost all hope that he would agree to peace conversations, his representatives were announced. It was the 19th of March. I managed to put up an appearance of calm and relative indifference when I received them. I noticed in them a certain satisfaction which probably came from the fact that they had previously lost hope of our entering into relationship. They told me that the General agreed to the opening of negotiations, but that he did not approve of the Council's being represented by the Councillor for Defence and the General in Command of Aggrouppment, because of their high military positions. In their place two officers of the Republican Army were to be chosen as representatives, whose only mission would be to settle details of our surrender.

I ended the conversation by telling the Nationalist representatives to come to my office that afternoon so that I could tell them the names of the officers chosen for this mission. When the Council met I told them the results of the interview, and they all considered that although General Franco was immovable on the question of unconditional surrender, it was not a bad symptom that he agreed to conversations. I suggested as emissaries of the Council Lieut.-Col. Antonio Garijo and Cavalry Commander Leopoldo Ortega, in command, respectively, of the Information Section and Organisation Section of the General Staff. The Council approved this suggestion unanimously, and that afternoon I gave Franco's representatives the names of our emissaries.

Two days later the Nationalist representatives came to see me again and brought me a despatch from the Generalissimo in which he agreed that our representatives should go by aeroplane on the 23rd, crossing by Somosierra in direct flight and landing at Burgos Aerodrome between 9 and 12 o'clock.

On the afternoon of the 21st the Council met. I told them of the communication I had received from the Nationalists, and expressed the opinion that it would be best for our representatives to take concrete instructions on the form which their conversations should take, and on the authority they would have.

It would be prolix to relate all the deliberations of the Council on this, and I will simply summarise them. So far as faculties for negotiations were concerned we agreed



not to give our emissaries power to make a definite compromise with the Nationalists. Their mission would be limited to explaining the wishes of the Council, gathering the intentions of the enemy, and informing the Council on their return. We also agreed to give our emissaries concrete instructions so that they would be able to carry on the conversations as the Council wished. These instructions may be summarised as follows:

1. To ask the Nationalists for a full and explicit clarification in writing of the Generalissimo's concessions, from which we would be able to see exactly who would be exempt from all responsibility.
2. To bring up early in the discussion the question of facilities for the evacuation of all who wished to leave, trying to convince the Nationalists that if, as it would appear, they wished Spaniards to live together in harmony, it was absolutely necessary that those whom they held responsible for the war should be able to leave Spain.
3. To convince the Nationalists that in order to carry out evacuation in an orderly manner, a period of at least twenty-five days was necessary. Our emissaries would carry a plan for handing over the zone.
4. To assure the Nationalists that we meant to show the greatest possible activity in the matter of provisions, speeding up as much as we could the arrival of those provisions which had already been bought abroad.

The Council agreed on this, and in order not to lose time decided to hold conversations with the Consuls of France and Great Britain to deal with the question of evacuation.

So that this decision of the Council's should be carried out, both Consuls were urgently summoned. Señor Besteiro and I had an interview with the French Consul, at which we told him that we would like to know the opinion of his Government as to what facilities it could give for allowing expatriated Spaniards into its territory. He told us that his Government wished to exercise the greatest restriction, and only to allow a selected number of people to enter. We tried to make him see the seriousness of our problem, which was how we might avoid leaving men who would be considered responsible at the mercy of the Nationalists, stating that we thought it necessary that France should agree that all who wished to leave the country should at least be allowed a minimum stay of thirty days.

The Consul in question, who during the whole conversation spoke with pointed coldness and indifference, told us that his Government would probably not put difficulties in the way of expatriated Spaniards remaining there in transit so long as these had visas for definite points of destination, but he thought it would be best, in order to give a definite answer, for him to go to Paris, and he would be able to carry out this consultation personally in the space of three days.

We expressed our agreement and asked him to make the

journey as quickly as possible. He said good-bye to us very civilly, but he gave me the impression that we Republicans did not enjoy his sympathies.

A little later the British Consul, Señor Milanés, arrived, and in order to enquire into British reaction to our peace negotiations we told him that we had decided definitely to refuse the intervention of foreign powers as mediators. Señor Milanés told us that he could not give any official opinion on such an important point, but privately and in a friendly way he considered that this was the best and perhaps the only solution. Personally I considered that this private opinion of Señor Milanés coincided with that of the British Government. We went on to tell the British Consul of the conversation we had had with the French Consul, and we asked him to tell us if his Government would agree to giving us means of transport by sea to Marseilles and Oran for those who wished to leave the country. Señor Milanés told us that his Government would have no objection to carrying out such a humane service with British warships which were just then off Levante, on condition that General Franco would agree to it.

Also the Council had commissioned the Supplies Chief, Don Trifón Gomez, to approach the Mexican Embassy in Paris to request him to arrange for refuge in his country for those who could leave Spain.

Having cleared up these points, I had a meeting with our two representatives in the peace negotiations and gave them concrete instructions as to what form their procedure

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should take with the Nationalists in their coming, and first, meeting. Having made a verbal explanation of these, I handed them the following document which had already been approved by the Council. This they were to hand over to the Nationalist representatives.

### *National Council of Defence to the Nationalist Command.*

We do not attempt to impose conditions. We wish for the good of Spain that our zone shall be handed over in the best possible circumstances, avoiding bloodshed. We wish that the Nationalist Government shall give facilities for the evacuation of men who think they ought to leave, temporarily or permanently. If this petition is granted, the surrender will be carried out in circumstances for which there is no precedent in all history, and which will be a wonder to the world. The people are prepared for this surrender to be a manifestation of cordiality which will assist the reconstruction of Spain.

If the Nationalist Government, however strong its reasons may be, will not agree to allow the evacuation of the persons referred to, we must honestly inform it that we cannot be responsible for what may happen among the political and syndicalist organisations, in a situation of collective fear for those men who wish to be expatriated. Probably in spite of the prestige and trust which the National Council of Defence has among the people, it would lose control, with the serious risk that there might be irreparable damage

done to the persons and property of those who are more or less linked with the Nationalists, or simply sympathisers with them in every time and place. This does not mean to say that the National Council for Defence, whatever the circumstances, will not try to keep public order at all costs, for it considers this to be a question of honour, and an interpretation of the general sentiments of the people of this zone, as well as its own personal sentiment.

We have in this zone a great quantity of artistic treasures at the disposition of the Nationalist Government. If, through any misunderstanding in the grave crisis through which we are passing, there should be violence by people who consider themselves accused or defrauded, it is possible that these artistic treasures will be destroyed.

The National Council of Defence does not demand but requests the Nationalist Government that the capital of the Republic shall not have to witness a march past of foreign forces, since we consider that its heroic and self-sacrificing conduct deserves the honour of this exemption, which will please it in the most unlooked-for way.

We think it would be best to carry out the surrender by zones, or by theatres of operations, so that there may be organisation and good order. We do not know if the Nationalist Government has already solved the problem of supplies for the civil population and the troops of the Republican zone, but if not,

the National Council of Defence will do all it can to assist in the solution of this serious problem, using for it the supplies which it has already acquired abroad, and which can be brought to this zone with comparative easiness. We point this out because the Republican zone is completely exhausted in this respect and for that reason needs imported supplies of flour as well as of vegetables and meat.

Those in command in this zone can give whatever explanations and details the Nationalist Government require with respect to this problem. It can also explain a plan for surrendering, naturally subject to any corrections which the Nationalist Government shall consider necessary. We can assure the Nationalist Government that this Council has taken the firm decision to reach direct agreement with its compatriots, and means to refuse any suggestions which may be made by foreign powers.

The evacuation to which we have referred means a transport problem for us. France will certainly agree to receive Spanish refugees in Marseilles and Oran whilst these are in transit, for a period of twenty-five or thirty days, provided we guarantee the French Government that they will leave for other countries within this time. Great Britain will arrange the transport of refugees to the French coasts, but for this the agreement of the Nationalist Government will be necessary. The National Council of Defence is occupied, in these really historic moments,

THE LAST DAYS OF MADRID

in deciding and valuing its credits in France and England.

Madrid, 21st March, 1939,  
for the National Council of Defence,  
SEGISMUNDO CASADO.

This document, which might appear indiscreet to those who do not know the circumstances and will perhaps be used politically by those who want to discredit the Council, did not actually give the enemy one single fact of which they were not already aware through their secret service.

Our emissaries, who perfectly understood the mission which the Council had entrusted to them, took off by aeroplane from Barajas Airport, accompanied by the Nationalist representatives in Madrid, at 10.30 a.m. on March 23rd. I need not enlarge on my preoccupation over their mission, and my anxiety to know the result of their conversation with the Nationalists. I spent the whole day making conjectures. Sometimes I was optimistic and supposed that peace negotiations would be carried on successfully, at other times I was in absolute despair, It was a day, like so many others, of real anguish, and its hours seemed interminable.

As I supposed they would be back by nightfall, I had proposed a Council meeting for 6.30 so that our emissaries could give their information without loss of time. At 7.0 they arrived and immediately commenced their report. This was the gist of it:

They had arrived at Burgos aerodrome at 11.30. An

unusual aspect of the aerodrome was the presence there of some Germans who took a great number of photographs of the Douglas machine which had brought them. After landing, they went to the airmen's chalet where they met the representatives of General Franco, Staff Colonels Gonzalo and Ungria. Although they were former comrades, these gentlemen received our emissaries coldly. They met in the officers' dining-room of the aerodrome and made a first exchange of impressions. Our emissaries explained the wishes of the Council. They said that they would hand over the zone within a minimum of twenty-five days, by theatres of operations, and in the following order: The Central, the Extremadura, the Andalucia, the Levante and the Interior, a plan which allowed enough time to make sure of the evacuation of all who wished to leave. Once our point of view had been explained, the Nationalist representatives withdrew to inform the Generalissimo, arranging to renew conversations at 3 o'clock. Our emissaries did not leave the room and lunch was served to them there.

On meeting again that afternoon, the Nationalist representatives were more amiable. They explained that the Generalissimo did not accept our proposal of a pact, and could not allow the handing over by zones. That was to say, he maintained his concessions, submitting the surrender to the following instructions:—



*Points for the Surrender of the Enemy Army and the Occupation of Their Territory.*

Calm, and the least possible harm to Spain, demand that the surrender of the troops of the Government of Madrid and the zone which it controls shall be done as quickly as possible, and at the same time with complete security for our forces. Therefore, it will be carried out in the following way:

1. On the 25th of this month the enemy Air Force will fly to aerodromes which will be indicated, the aeroplanes carrying their complete armament and equipment, but without ammunition or bombs. (Navalmoral, Caceres, Badajos, Merida, Teruel, Cordoba, between three and six o'clock.)
2. The surrender of the enemy forces shall be carried out as follows:
  - (i) At H. hours on the 27th three artillery salvos shall be fired on all sections of the front (or an equal number of rockets if it is not possible to make the signal in the form stated). At this signal a group of emissaries composed of a commanding officer and four other officers carrying a white flag, shall come out from each brigade in the front line, and march to our line. These emissaries shall be led before the officer commanding the sector, and shall be carrying with them complete details of the situation of their forces, which shall have been drawn up beforehand, as will be explained in detail.

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- (ii) The front line forces shall be drawn up in brigades, five or six kilometres behind their fighting positions, unarmed, and 500 metres from the penetration routes.
- (iii) The arms of these units (rifles, machine guns, mortars) shall be placed in separate buildings near the penetration lines, and duly guarded. The troops shall keep supplies of clothing, money, cooking materials, blankets, etc., and all necessities of life. The N.C.O.'s shall provisionally continue exercising their authority.
- (iv) The emissaries shall give information about what means of passive resistance there may be in their lines, removing beforehand, or putting out of action, mines in trenches or in communication works under construction, or pointing out the positions where they have not been able to do so.
- (v) Lines of patrols will immediately leave our front, and the emissaries will accompany these as guides. With these patrols will go forces of sappers to facilitate the advance (wire cutting, repair of routes). These patrols will occupy the whole depth of the enemy lines.
- (vi) The Senior Officers, Officers and Junior Officers shall gather, separated from other troops and at some distance from them, in separate buildings.
- (vii) A Company of the Nationalist Army shall take charge of the forces of each Brigade drawn up in this way.

- (viii) Provision supplies and Health organisations shall continue to be looked after by the personnel now in charge of them, but these shall be considered as prisoners of the corresponding services in the Nationalist Army.
- (ix) In special cases when enemy concentrations shall not be considered advisable behind the lines, the surrender shall be done in front of these, the troops to be disarmed and drawn up in whatever places shall be indicated to them, at a distance of about five kilometres from our lines. This is particularly to be noted for the Madrid front, between Cerro del Aguila and Villaverde. The enemy forces should carry provisions for forty-eight hours.
- 3. The Reserve in the second line shall surrender in the same way when the Nationalist patrols shall reach them, the patrols being guided by the emissaries. As has been stated, they shall be formed in Brigades outside the town, disarmed and separated from their Senior Officers, Officers and Junior Officers, and their arms placed in separate buildings.
- 4. *War Material.*  
All war material, apart from the armaments already mentioned, shall be deposited as much as possible in like manner, in closed places near the penetration lines.  
*Transport Material.*  
Transport which is needed for the provision of prisoners, shall be kept at their service. The rest,

such as the artillery transport and transport used for munitions and other war material, shall be parked at specified points, where officers of the Transport Service shall be in charge, under whom the prisoners shall remain. The provision and clothing deposits of the great units shall be under the Supplies Officer of the Army Corps, under whose orders the personnel connected with them shall remain as prisoners.

5. *Zone behind the lines.*

In districts behind the lines, the military commanders shall have all arms collected from their forces and placed at points conveniently safe, away from the civil population, and shall hand over the command to a retired soldier or prisoner, if there is one, or if not, to some person of known Nationalist sympathies. The armed forces necessary for looking after these shall remain at his orders, as guardians of public order. Proclamations shall be made for these provisional authorities, warning everyone of the grave consequences of any kind of reprisal or violence. Prisoners and political prisoners who are in support of our cause shall be set at liberty. In all public services (communications, provisions, light, etc.) the personnel necessary must remain at their posts, and if through the people responsible having fled there shall be any danger of interruption of these services they shall be maintained at all costs, even if under strength.

6. *Means of Communication.*

The officers commanding the enemy army shall take

whatever measures are necessary to prevent any attempt at the destruction of communication lines of any kind (roads, railways, electric current), and shall arrange for the necessary protection so that nobody shall be able to interrupt them, especially in the principal points around Madrid, and the communications which cross the Tajo towards Levante, and those which go from Andalucia eastwards.

7. *The Mediterranean Coast.*

The Madrid authorities should make certain of obedience from the forces which are garrisoning coastal towns, so that if they are under their absolute control the rapid occupation of Almeria, Cartagena, Alicante and Valencia may be proceeded with, to help the return of normality to national life. In this case, the authorities mentioned should give strict orders that on the appearance of our ships a tug shall go out with technicians and hostages to be handed over to the Nationalist authorities who come to take over the towns. Military forces which may be in these shall be concentrated in the outskirts, carrying out the procedure already explained for the forces in the interior. (We have information that there is an important collection of artistic riches in Cartagena. The necessary guard should be placed over this to avoid its disappearance or deterioration.)

8. *Aviation.*

When the aircraft has been handed over to us on our grounds, our air units shall prepare to occupy

the enemy flying fields, timing their action with the march of the troops and being able to send by aeroplane officers and commissioners to take charge of the material.

9. *Factories.*

The Factories of War Material and those of other things shall continue their work without stoppage or interruption, and where there are industries organised on the collective basis the organisation shall be broken up and the factories handed over to their rightful owners, or if these are absent, to responsible technicians.

10 *Recuperation.*

All stores and deposits must remain organised, watched and guarded, until our recuperation services shall have taken charge of them. Civil transport both of people and supplies in localities which are not under the army, shall remain with the same services as they have now. Any carelessness or fault by any kind of authority or individual shall be severely punished.

In Burgos, the 23rd May, 1939,  
the 3rd Triumphant Year.

The document begins by showing that the Burgos Government was unaware of the political and military situation in our zone, since it says "troops of the Madrid Government and in the zone which this controls." That is to say that the Nationalist Government believed that

in the Republican area there were territories which were not controlled by the National Council of Defence. Our emissaries guaranteed the Nationalists that the whole Republican zone was well under the control of the Council and that nobody was disobeying the orders which it gave.

In paragraph one, the condition was made that before six o'clock on the 25th March there should be a symbolic surrender of the Republican Air Force. Our emissaries stated that this was not possible since it left only one day to prepare this and carry it out, and that, naturally, this would be running the risk that our pilots, instead of going to the Nationalists' zone, would leave Spain, some because they feared reprisals and others because they were too spirited to surrender on such terms.

As for the surrender of all our forces on the 27th, our emissaries objected that it was impossible to carry it out in such a short space of time and in a mechanical way, and also because in these circumstances if the Nationalists took charge of the whole zone including the ports it would be impossible to carry out the expatriation. To this they replied that the Generalissimo would leave us two ports in Levante for our use, so that we should have sufficient time to arrange for the embarkation of those who wished to leave. They also said that he would make no objection to them leaving, that he gave permission for the help which the British Government could give us in the matter of maritime transport, and that if we thought it necessary we could communicate to him details of each ship leaving port, so that his fleet would not

put any difficulties in the way of her departure.

Our emissaries asked for some elucidation of the concessions of the Generalissimo, and pointed out the need for a document to be drawn up to make these formal and serve the National Council of Defence as a guarantee to the Spanish people. The Nationalist representatives explained that no pact would be signed, that there could be no amplification of the concessions and that we ought to adjust ourselves strictly to the instructions given by the Generalissimo. We had, they said, the absolute assurance that he had the best intentions and desired cordiality and harmony.

When we had heard their information, we dismissed the emissaries and remained in Council to discuss what had happened and to reach some conclusion.

The obduracy of the Nationalists moved nearly all of the Councillors to a state of great indignation. We believed that when one was trying to arrange a surrender the least that could be done was the drawing up of a document to be signed by both sides and stating clearly the conditions fixed and mutual guarantees given. The attitude of the Nationalists in denying us this had no precedent in history, especially since these negotiations were between compatriots. However, there was some hope that negotiations could be resumed because, although they were apparently cut off, the Generalissimo's representatives had given ours a simple code in case we should need to communicate something to the Nationalist Government.



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When we had studied the plan of surrender which the Nationalist Government wanted to impose on us, we reached the following conclusions:

1. To send a radiogram to the Nationalist Government telling them that it was impossible to carry out the symbolic surrender of the Air Force in the time fixed. (The radiogram was sent that day.)
2. To ask the Nationalists to give our emissaries another interview. (This was done that same evening.)
3. To demand from the Nationalists that they would sign a document making quite clear the concessions of the Generalissimo, and amplifying them with respect to his guarantees for evacuation.

On the morning of the 25th, in reply to our radiogram, we received one from the Nationalists in which they agreed to another interview in Burgos between the representatives of both sides.

Our emissaries took off at once, with complete instructions, and reached Burgos aerodrome at 2.25 on the 25th. They were received by the Generalissimo's representatives. They opened the conversations, explaining that we wanted a document to be signed on the basis of the Generalissimo's concessions as a fuller guarantee, suitably amplified and clarified, in which it should be made clear that there would be no difficulty for those who wished to leave the country. After explaining this request they repeated in the name of the Council the advisability of handing over

our territory by zones in a space of twenty-five days.

The Nationalist representatives refused our request with respect to zones, but agreed that the document we wanted should be drawn up and signed by both sides. Lieut.-Col. Garijo of the Republican Army undertook to draw up the document, but at six o'clock, whilst he was still occupied in this important task, one of Franco's representatives explained that at that moment negotiations must be considered finally broken off, because the symbolic surrender of our Air Force had not been made at the appointed time. Our emissaries explained that on the night of the 23rd the Council had sent a radiogram to Burgos in which it was made clear that there was no time to carry out the surrender within the period allowed.

In spite of the fact that it was already late, and that flying would be dangerous on account of the atmospheric conditions, the Nationalist representatives repeated to our emissaries that they should leave Burgos immediately. Our emissaries, completely taken aback by this extraordinary behaviour, reached Madrid at 7.30. They at once came to report to the Council which was already in session. The Council, after a long deliberation, agreed that all we could do was to try and save as much as possible of the situation by every means in our power, and consequently, after informing the Air Force Command, we sent the following radiogram to Burgos:

*National Council of Defence to Nationalist Government.*  
To-morrow, Monday, aircraft shall be handed over.

Please appoint time. Impossible to-day for technical reasons. Transmitted at one o'clock on the 26th March.

*National Council of Defence to Nationalist Government.*  
We extend previous radiogram to state that it may be possible to hand over aircraft late to-day. If so, we will duly communicate. Transmitted at two o'clock, 26th March.

The enemy replied as follows:

Extremely urgent. In view of imminent advance on various points of the fronts, some of them impossible to delay, we advise the forces in front lines to show the white flag before preparations by artillery and aircraft, taking advantage of a short pause which will be given so that they may send hostages with flag of surrender, following as far as possible the instructions already given. (Received at 3.04 o'clock on the 26th March).

This communication from the Nationalist made us most indignant. We realised that the enemy had no intention of proceeding in good faith, of which the National Council of Defence had given ample proofs.

The enemy, two hours after the Council had received that radiogram, began two attacks, one in the Pozoblanco region towards Almaden, and two from the bridge-head of Toledo on Mora and the hills of Ocaña. They met no resistance to either of their attacks, but nevertheless I gave

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no order for the surrender of those fronts, or any other. At four o'clock that day the enemy, with an arbitrariness that later recoiled against them, gave out by radio the Generalissimo's concessions in case of our surrender.

The situation was extremely serious. In Madrid the nervousness of the people was accentuated, and they did not hide their very strong and uncontrollable wish that peace should be made. Besides, the concessions of the Generalissimo, broadcast at that moment, were intended to persuade officers and men to surrender, since in an extremely clever manner they declared that those who had committed no crimes of bloodshed would not be punished. In view of this grim situation the Council met, and after discussing the matter at some length decided to use the radio to explain to the people the progress of negotiations and their suspension, imploring them to avoid acts of violence or disorderly flight by the troops or by a great part of the civil population of Madrid.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ARMY DOES NOT SURRENDER

AT ten-thirty p.m. on the 26th, by accord with the National Council of Defence, the following broadcast was made:

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF DEFENCE EXPLAINS TO  
THE COUNTRY ITS PROCEDURE IN PEACE  
NEGOTIATIONS AND THEIR BREAKING OFF

Don José del Rio, Secretary of the Council, speaks to all Spaniards to tell them of the negotiations which the Council has carried on with the Nationalist Government to reach an accord which will lead to an end of the War:

"The National Council of Defence at the appropriate time reported the opening of peace negotiations, and now, in this historic moment, submits to the consideration of the world, and especially of Spaniards, an account of its behaviour in a matter of such great importance. It must justify itself before history and show that it has been loyal to the people who have so generously given it their confidence. For that reason the Council makes no appeal to artifice and uses no vagaries, but presents documents of absolute authenticity in which may be seen incontrovertibly the loyalty with which it has served the people

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and sought for peace, even at the sacrifice of individual dignity. It has kept its eyes fixed on the interests of its country and the avoidance of bloodshed for the sons of Spain who wish for peace. The National Council of Defence has been astonished by what has happened and cannot understand the intentions of the Nationalist Government, to whom it offered everything necessary for the surrender of the Republican zone in the best conditions possible."

*Speeches made before the microphone of Union Radio of Madrid, 27th of March, 1939, at ten o'clock.*

*Don Bruno Navarro, in the name of the General Union of Workers (U.G.T.).*

"*Compañeros*, in the name of the Local Federation of Syndicates of the U.G.T. and in these moments in which you have just heard the instructions of the National Council of Defence, it is the duty of every workman, of every Spaniard to give us support in this difficult task. How can you help the National Council of Defence? Every citizen must place his highest qualities of judgment and prudence in the service of collective interest, having the calm necessary to ignore tendentious news which tries to demoralise Madrid and sow confusion. Yes, the workers' organisations of Madrid, which have all along proofs of their conscience and their ability to distinguish between falsehood and truth, ought to do so more than ever at this time than heretofore.

"The National Council of Defence has our full confidence. As on similar occasions we shall help it with enthusiasm, respecting its orders, confident that by so doing we shall achieve something positive for Madrid and our country.

"Everyone at his post, doing his duty however difficult that it may be, assuring the fulfilment of one of the principal needs that exists at this moment. Calm, friends. The Madrid workers' organisations expect that of you."

*Don Julian Gomez Egido, in the name of the Madrid Socialist Parties.*

"Since the press has revealed what has been done with the Nationalist Government to secure an end to the war, a state of nervousness has been produced among us. Rumour-mongers have taken advantage of this to increase its dangers and cause the consequent alarm behind the lines, which will in due course affect the fronts. All day expectation and restlessness have been felt among some of our comrades, and it is certain that although these are difficult moments, the more difficult they are the more calm we ought to be, so as not to make difficulties for those arranging for evacuation. It is necessary to put a calm front towards dangers, just as one must show decisiveness for the attack, because in one form or another it will mean saving difficulties and at the same time lessening the sacrifice. The Socialist Party in Madrid advises all within its ranks, and the people in general, to keep calm and do as they always have done,

trusting the National Council of Defence, because it has the means of solving the problems which individually you cannot solve. But if you keep up this state of nervousness which has dominated some of our comrades, you will neither solve your problems nor allow them to be solved. Circumstances are not so pressing that they will not allow us to organise the end of the Spanish drama with that calm which has characterised Madrid throughout the whole war. Madrid, we may be assured, will have the fine and heroic grace of knowing how to lose, and will know also how to take advantage of—in an ironic phrase—the bitterness of seeing itself conquered to be born again. Calm, and take no notice of rumours which help to make our situation worse.”

*Don José del Río, Councillor for Public Instruction, in the name of the Republican Union.*

“Spaniards in the Republican Zone. The times through which we are passing need the calm of everybody in whatever position, whether fighting or of responsibility. Loyal trust in the orders which come from the National Council of Defence is necessary for us all. The success of our efforts depends on that, and on the collaboration of soldiers and civilians. The National Council of Defence counts, and will continue to count, on the trust and support of all Spanish Republicans who have seen the common desire for peace fulfilled under its noble and patriotic leadership. Let nobody vacillate in doing his duty. Let nobody assume attributes which are not his



own and let everybody carry out with discipline whatever orders the National Council of Defence shall give. These times need calm and trust. Calm, so that at every post duty may be done, implying confidence in the Council, so that at all times it may dictate the means which will carry us to the achievement of those aspirations which are common to us all. Evacuation will be carried out in an orderly and methodical way based always on obedience to the orders of the National Council of Defence. The latter has known how to interpret the wish for peace of the Spanish people and it will know how to take us always towards the fulfilment of our wishes. Whoever turns aside with bad faith from its orders will be a traitor to his country. All who co-operate and collaborate with it will be worthy of the recognition of Spain. Obedience to the National Council of Defence. Long live the Republic. Long live Spain."

*Don Manuel Gonzalez Marin, Councillor for the Exchequer and Economics. Representing the Spanish Anarchist Federation (F.A.I.).*

"Fellow workers. In the name of the National Council of Defence and of the Libertarian movement, I address you in this critical and decisive moment, to tell you, with the sense of responsibility which has always characterised us, what are the decisions and procedures which all anti-Fascists and Libertarians of all sectors ought to follow in this supreme moment. To achieve a total reorganisation of this country and dedicate the energies of the people to

place of work. Those who have a sense of worth and duty, those who are incapable of treason, ought to remain firm and alert at their posts, ready for what will be decided in due course. The National Council of Defence, in collaboration with the responsible leaders of all parties and organisations, in this critical situation which we find ourselves, is preparing and organising on its own responsibility the salvation of all who must be saved. Let nobody think of that spirit of '*sauve qui peut*,' which can only be used by traitors and cowards to drown the moral values of anti-Fascism in chaos.

"The evacuation of militant anti-Fascists in the front line and in the interior needs the greatest sense of responsibility and probity on everybody's part, if it is to be carried out with the necessary order and organisation. Let nobody have suspicions or distrust. Let nobody fear or even think of deceit and treason. The men and organisations of anti-Fascism have assumed the trust and responsibility of saving the lives of all the men at the front and behind the lines who are threatened by the invader. Firmness, calm, and a sense of responsibility for everyone. Let nobody abandon his post until he receives orders to do so. On this sense of responsibility and firmness depend the guarantees of your own salvation. All the organisations and parties, with the accord of the National Council of Defence, are beginning at this moment to establish the necessary relations with their members in the front and behind the lines. Let the latter on their part strengthen these relations with

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the corresponding delegates of all the organisations.

"Firmness and calm. Do not let our behaviour during the long months of fighting, which has been maintained with an exemplary sense of honour, be spoilt at this last hour. Every man in his place, putting his duty above all things. The National Council of Defence and the Libertarian movement are, and will be, with all those who do that."

*Don Segismundo Casado, Councillor of National Defence.*

"Spaniards. Twenty-four hours have passed since the National Council of Defence told you of the results of the peace negotiations which we had carried on with the Nationalist Government. Therefore the situation in which we find ourselves is a secret from nobody. Since the offensive announced by the Command of the other side has started the troops of the National Council of Defence are obeying the orders of their officers, as also are those behind the lines. I can assure you that in the whole of the loyal zone nothing has happened contrary to the plans conceived by us in taking over the constitutional power of Republican Spain on the 5th of March. Life goes on normally, the civil authorities and military commanders communicate their impressions of the zone under their command and they all assure us of perfect order. In Madrid there is complete calm. The streets, crowded as ever and lively with citizens who are commenting on events, offer a moral spectacle without signs of nerve strain and without anybody acting on his own initiative.

Organisations and political parties work under the order of the National Council of Defence, which shows a full ratification of their confidence in us, and a fervent desire that the hope of peace which we pursue may become a reality in the immediate future, for the good of Spain.

"At no time has this National Council of Defence dropped the idea for which it was constituted. The Spanish people knows this and for this reason we can assure them that everything will be carried out according to our wishes, which are no other, we repeat, than the war should be ended as soon as possible and that peace should be quickly made for the good of the country. The magnificent example which we are giving to the world, a sign of conciliation and mutual respect, should be taken into account by all. And it is for this reason that those behind the lines in our zone who wish for peace for the reconstruction of Spain should listen to no orders but those which come from the National Council of Defence.

"All Spaniards are convinced of the reality of our intentions. Our continual contact with public opinion has made the confidence which was given to us on the 5th of March more effective. We will do our part to balance this trust from the citizens of Spain and we ourselves will not avoid the fulfilment of our duties. For that reason, only official orders must find an echo in the popular conscience.

"I speak to all Spaniards, confident that my sincere words will serve to calm everybody. In putting myself

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in contact with you again by means of this microphone, I make you new promises of peace in the name of all Spaniards in this zone. Long live Spain."

\* \* \* \*

The way in which things had happened since peace negotiations had been broken off was strange and unjustifiable, and showed that the Nationalist Command had no intention of responding to the sense of chivalry which had been shown by the National Council of Defence.

And one might enquire, why had the Nationalist Command made a show of giving us instructions for surrendering the Republican front, according to which the surrender would have to be made after a preliminary warning by artillery fire and air bombardment of our lines by the Nationalists?

Why did not the Nationalist Command allow the surrender of the Republican zone to be carried out methodically and step by step in the space of twenty-five days?

Why, without reason to justify it or precedent to make it advisable, did the Nationalist Command angrily suspend peace negotiations?

In my judgment they behaved in this way because the Nationalists, like their allies and protectors the totalitarian states, wanted to achieve a political and military victory of a spectacular kind. Their excessive insolence actually only snatched the victory from their hands, since the Republican Army did not surrender.

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There actually happened what might be called the self-demobilisation of the Republican Army, and it took place under such excellent conditions that in spite of the fact that 800,000 men were concerned, we did not have to regret one single act of violence, nor to contemplate the terrible sight of a disorderly retreat.

On the contrary, everything was done with a calm and orderliness which were really impressive and a true reflection of our people's great sense of responsibility. And I say *our* people's because this was a People's Army, with officers, in most cases, coming from the ranks, that is to say from among the non-combatant classes, though militant members of Republican parties and workers' and peasants' organisations.

The Nationalists abused their own position and instead of success their inexplicable behaviour earned them a complete failure. On the afternoon of the 26th, the Generalissimo's peace concessions were announced by radio. The Republican troops wanted peace, though they would have remained at their posts if the Senior Officers and Officers had demanded it of them. But evidently the officers had gathered from the Generalissimo's offer that they had nothing to fear if they did not resist. They knew that the enemy's offensive was imminent, they were aware that they could do nothing against its drive, and that what resistance they could put up would mean a great number of dead, and subsequent loss of life and liberty. Also they realised the possibility that the enemy, once he had started his offensive and met with resistance,

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would use the totalitarian plan of violent bombing and firing on the civil population. For all these reasons the Senior Officers and Officers decided to allow their troops to act as they wished. Nearly the whole of these left the front in small groups and in perfect calm and order and went to their homes meaning not to use arms again. A few units went over to the enemy, and first among these were the 40th and 42nd Brigades, both of them with Communist sympathies. They did this not out of sympathy towards the Nationalists, but because they considered that the War was finished.

During the later part of the afternoon of the 27th, the Commander of the Central Army told me that the soldiers were leaving the front without any express orders having been given, that a few units had gone over to the enemy in Casa de Campo and University City, and that the soldiers of both sides were at that moment fraternising, with dances and songs, saying that there was no more war. He also told me that the Officer in Command of the 2nd Army Corps had just had an interview with the Nationalist Commander of the Clinic Hospital Sector in University City, asking him to convince the Republican soldiers that they should return to their trenches and that this officer had explained that it was quite useless to try to do so, and that by superior order it had been arranged that Nationalist troops should not fire on Republican soldiers.

The Commander of the Central Army asked for instructions, and in view of the situation I ordered that he should raise no objection to the forces leaving the front,

understanding that if he tried to impose his authority in those moments it would be a cause of violence and perhaps the beginning of a great tragedy. At nine o'clock that day the Commander of the Central Army informed me that all the forces of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Army Corps had left the front and that only the General Staff remained at its Headquarters. In such circumstances it was impossible to fulfil the conditions of surrender which the Generalissimo had tried to impose on us.

From that moment Madrid was at the mercy of the enemy. Nevertheless all the members of the Council, except its President, General Miaja, who had gone to Valencia, remained in the capital. In view of the gravity of the situation, I called together the Council and told them in detail what had happened, expressing to the Councillors my wish that they should immediately leave for Valencia. I myself should remain in Madrid till the following day, accompanied by the Councillor for Communications, Eduardo Val. At dawn on the 28th, the Councillors Gonzalez Marin, Wenceslao Carillo, José del Rio and Antonio Perez, left for Valencia. The Councillors for State and Justice, Besteiro and Ariño, decided not to leave, preferring to wait there for the arrival of the Nationalists.

At seven o'clock on the morning of the 28th, when not a single soldier remained on the fronts, except on the Guadalajara Front, I gave orders to the Commander of the Central Army that he should get into touch with the Nationalists to make a formal surrender, since, as I



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have already said, troops and officers had left the front.

The enemy command communicated to the Commander of the Central Army that he could present himself to them at the Clinic Hospital, accompanied by his Staff, at eleven o'clock. When this moment had come, I considered that as a member of the National Council of Defence my work in Madrid was finished, while on the other hand the work that was waiting for me in Valencia I considered very important, since it was necessary to liquidate the other armies in the same way. We hoped to delay this as long as possible so as to gather together in Alicante and Valencia as many as we could of those whom the enemy would hold responsible. At the same time I wanted to reiterate to the Governments of France and Great Britain that they should send means of transport by sea and authorisation for refugees to remain temporarily or permanently in Oran or France.

From Madrid, I sent a message to the President of the French Republic in which I most anxiously pleaded that he should authorise the disembarkation in France of all who could leave, and requested that he should intercede with the British Government to use certain units of their Fleet for transport. The same day a message was sent to the President of the Mexican Republic begging him that he should give authority for those who had to leave Spain as a result of the war to remain in Mexico.

The Council received no answer to these messages.

What was happening meanwhile in the other armies?  
On the Extremadura Front, the enemy began an attack

northwards from Pozoblanco on Almaden, and another from the north southwards from Toledo to Mora de Toledo, with another attack on the Ocaña hills. Our troops who had been ordered to resist retired without fighting, leaving the territory as the enemy wished. The enemy made these attacks with very small forces.

In the armies of the Levante and Andalucia our forces remained in their positions without being attacked by the enemy. It is certain that the latter advanced on Almaden and Mora de Toledo not with the idea of isolating the Extremadura Army, but simply with the object of making our forces retreat so that they could occupy the zone quickly without fighting.

If things had happened in a more or less normal manner we should have had four or five days more, which would have been time enough to finish the evacuation of people and to take them to the coast, and to insist that our petition to France and Great Britain should be heard.

We were able to gather that France would put every kind of difficulty in the way of our efforts to solve the evacuation problem which for the Council was of capital importance. The Consul of the neighbouring republic remained impassive towards our great tragedy. All he would offer was a visa for me and for a few other persons, an offer which I refused because I have always detested privilege. I might mention that six months before this I had pointed out to the Minister of State, Señor Alvarez del Vayo, that this Consul was far from sympathetic to the use of the Spanish Republic.

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Convinced that the Nationalist Command wished to occupy the different zones in the manner which by my order our representatives had suggested to him, but much more swiftly, I gave orders to the General in Command of Aggrouppment, in which I authorised the retreat from the front by all officers and soldiers who would be considered responsible, and said that the units should remain in their positions until they received orders to surrender. Even in giving these orders, I knew that the troops would leave the front before they would surrender, but I could not state this officially as it might have produced violence and also because I wanted to hold the fronts without fighting as long as possible, to give time for collecting those who were to be evacuated.

When my work in Madrid was finished I had reached the most unhappy moment of my life. Circumstances forced me to depart without taking leave of my friends, but I felt much more deeply the fact that I had to leave Madrid without saying good-bye to the great people of the capital whom I had always loved so much and for whom I had worked so long, trying to make bearable their privations and sacrifices. I left with the conviction that the Madrid populace would never confuse me with those wretches who had lived by the war at the cost of the people, but that they would keep a grateful memory of me. I must admit that during my journey from the Chancellery (in which my headquarters had been) to Algete, from which aerodrome I should take a plane, I suffered indescribable emotions. I felt the anguish of

leaving the people of Madrid, who had given everything in the war. I went to the aerodrome without any kind of disguise, in my official car with flag flying, preceded by motor-cyclists and followed by a line of cars. It never occurred to me that the people would make any kind of show of protest against me. Actually during the journey through crowded suburbs the people who were expectantly in the streets showed the greatest respect for me, and I could see the gratitude in their faces. That was some comfort.

In the aerodrome, all those who were leaving met. Among them were my wife, my aides-de-camp, Councillor Val and General Matallana.

We had some coffee and when we went out in small groups to take the 'plane which was in the centre of the aerodrome, Nationalist aircraft flew directly overhead. There was a moment of doubt, but as there was no time to lose I arranged for our leaving immediately, giving orders to the pilots that they should fly very low. As the 'plane took off, I was deeply moved to see Madrid disappear and tortured by the thought that this heroic city would be insulted by the presence of foreign troops. During the journey, which we made at low altitude, I saw strings of lorries and groups of soldiers going home, realising, perhaps, the uselessness of their magnificent sacrifice.

On reaching the aerodrome of Manises (Valencia), I gathered the fact that the garrison was very disturbed. I ordered that the troops should be drawn up and I told them that according to Franco's promise those who had

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not committed crimes of bloodshed would go free. I told them to stay at their posts, ready to obey whatever orders they should receive, avoiding acts against military discipline. My words did something to raise the spirits of those fine boys, perhaps a bit estranged till then as a result of the campaign which the Communist Party had carried on against me.

On arriving in Valencia, I set up my headquarters in the building which had been the Captaincy General. I did not do so in that which during the war had served as Prime Ministry and Ministry of National Defence, because at that moment Colonel Nieto of the Carabineers was taking charge there of jewels, dividends and two thousand bottles of mercury, which representatives of Dr. Negrin were guarding. The Councillor for the Exchequer gave orders that they should be handed over to the Reparations Fund.

The civil population of Valencia showed great expectancy, hoping anxiously for the end of hostilities.

Early that afternoon, I was agreeably surprised by the presence in Valencia of a Commission sent by the International Committee of Co-ordination. Their visit was announced and I received them immediately. In the presence of other Councillors they told me that they meant to carry out as many attempts and as much work as were necessary and possible to assist evacuation and that they needed to know approximately how much time they had in which to do so. I thanked them for their offer which I accepted in the name of the Council. Unfortunately I

could not give them a concrete answer about the time left to us for evacuation. These gentlemen did not know that a great proportion of the troops had left the fronts and that those who remained did not mean to fight, and that I had no intention of ordering them to resist. I would not do this because even if they obeyed my orders, which was improbable, the result would have been to sacrifice many lives, provoke a cruel persecution, and create a state of things which would be catastrophic indeed. This would have been a crime for which I should have been chiefly responsible. Therefore it was very difficult to make predictions as to what time was left for evacuation, since it chiefly depended on what the enemy would do.

I did not wish to express this thought to the members of this committee because it would have been no use and moreover because I did not know whether these were genuinely anti-Fascist enough to hear of the chaotic conditions of our army. Therefore I contented myself with saying that we might have three days, but I did not suppose the enemy would wish to precipitate matters. I told them that the National Council of Defence had sent two messages to the President of the French Republic, asking for help in our terrible situation so that, acting with Great Britain, he might assist our plan of evacuation. I told them also that we had concentrated most of those who were to be evacuated at Alicante, since this was the port farthest from the fronts. Lastly, I explained to them that during the peace negotiations, General Franco had promised not to oppose that evacuation and that he would

retreating without resistance and the centres of organisation are broken before the advance of the enemy. The enemy has reached from the North as far as Mora de Toledo and from the South to near the mines of Almaden."

In the Levante and Andalusian armies the troops were also leaving the front in great numbers.

In view of the situation, I ordered that the Commander of the Extremadura Army should take up his position at General Headquarters in Ciudad Real, try to gather his forces together to make a new front, but give no order to resist, the idea being to wait for the moment in which the enemy would announce his attack.

During the night I kept up direct communication with the various commanders. I gathered that Murcia and Ciudad Real were in the hands of the Nationalists. I called the Military Commandant of Murcia and the new commander who was under Franco's orders came to the telephone. He told me that the Republican Military Commandant was well, and that he had given orders that there should be no difficulties made for all who wished to leave for the coast, that there was perfect order and that he guaranteed on the part of the Nationalists that they would commit no acts of violence.

Afterwards I called Ciudad Real, asked for General Escobar in command of the Extremadura Army, and the Nationalist Military Commandant told me that the General was being perfectly well looked after, that no acts

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of violence would be allowed and that there was perfectly good order.

This behaviour on the part of the Nationalists probably meant that they did not know the real situation of our forces and they assumed this attitude for fear that acts of violence on their part would provoke a reaction from the Republican forces.

Through the events which I have already explained, it happened that on the morning of the 29th, practically all the armies were dissolved. At eleven o'clock I gave instructions for the surrender, a surrender which naturally could not be made because none of the fronts were garrisoned.

On the morning of the 29th, messages were repeated to the Presidents of France and Mexico, most anxiously pleading for their help.

At this time, only the Councillors for National Defence, Government, the Exchequer, Public Instruction and Communications remained with me in Valencia. The President of the Council General Miaja, had left by aeroplane for Oran at dawn of that day.

From the balcony of my office I watched the spectacle of Valencia. Agitation and excitement were to be seen everywhere and one felt that there was an atmosphere of extraordinary stress.

At midday, when I was holding a meeting with the other Councillors, it was announced to us that Nationalist Representatives in Valencia wished to have an interview with the Council, that first we should receive a visit from



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Engineer Font de Mora, who on account of his political behaviour could act as a guarantee of neutrality for both sides. It was unanimously agreed to receive Señor Font de Mora's visit.

A few minutes later, when we had met this gentleman, he explained that the Nationalists wished to avoid bloodshed at all costs, and that acting in accord with the consulates, they had themselves prepared the Patronal Building so that some two thousand of those who might be held responsible could take refuge in it and that they would remain completely guaranteed by the following conditions: Guarantee of their being able to leave Spain if they wished it. An enquiry would be held of all who were there and those who had committed crimes of bloodshed would be obliged to leave Spain, and means would be provided for these. The others could remain there for some time and decide whether they wished to remain or leave the country.

He explained, moreover, the wish of the Nationalists that in order to give some calm to Valencia (so necessary in those grave moments), it would be a good thing if we arranged for the relief of the Military Commandant, General Aranguren, and the Civil Governor, Señor Molina Conejero.

When we had heard the proposal which the Nationalists had made through Señor Font de Mora, the Council arranged that he should wait in an anteroom to hear our opinion. After a short discussion the Council unanimously decided to receive the Nationalists to table their

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propositions, and we chose as Military Commandant a Major of the Assault Guard, Señor Carretero, and as Chief of Public Order the Sub-Secretary of the Presidency of the Council, Señor Sanchez Requena.

When our discussion was ended I spoke with Señor Font de Mora to tell him that the Council would agree to meet the Nationalists and the meeting was held a few minutes later.

I spoke first to explain to them what were the Council's proposals and I did so in a manner so truly Spanish, that these men could not conceal their emotion, probably because they believed that there could be no patriotic sentiment among "Reds." In the name of the Council I told them that we would accept the idea of installing those who might be held responsible in the Patronal Building, with the guarantee they offered, and that we would immediately give orders for the relief of the Military Commandant and the Civil Governor. The Nationalists approved of the choice made by the Council for these two positions.

They then asked for safe-conducts so that two of them could go to the Franco zone, safe-conducts which were given to them. One noticed in all of them a somewhat pre-occupied manner, probably because they thought there might be deeds of bloodshed in Valencia. For this very reason they wished to go to their zone and delay the entrance of the Nationalist troops into Valencia, so that the surrender could be made in good order. These men were probably convinced that they had control of the Nationalist masses in Valencia.

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As we were finishing our conversations, in the building opposite my office the Nationalist flag had just been unfurled. I went out on the balcony and lorries began to pass full of excited people who were shouting: "Arriba España!" and making the Fascist salute. The Nationalist representatives, who saw all this from the window of my office, could not repress their indignation and were really frightened. They asked me if I would go as soon as possible to the Radio to speak to the people of Valencia and calm them. The Leader of the Falange for Catalonia and Levante was very surprised, and could not understand what had happened, because the Falangists had been ordered to remain in their houses.

When I had ordered the relief of the Military Commandant and the Civil Governor I took advantage of the generous offer which had been made to me by the Minister of Panama that I should put my wife under the protection of that Republic in the building of its Legation in Valencia, and also Generals Aranguren and Martinez Cabrera, and Colonel of the Assault Guard, Armando Alvarez. (It should be quite evident that if, as the Communists have said, I had been working with France and Great Britain, it would not have occurred to me to place them in the Panama Legation, since Franco had refused to recognise this Government, but rather that I should have put them under the protection of the British and French Consulates. If I had done this I would have avoided what afterwards happened, that is to say that the Nationalists should assault the Legation and take them all

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prisoners, carrying away my wife as a prisoner among prostitutes and common criminals.)

When they were installed in the Panama Legation, I went to the building of Radio-Valencia. This was dangerous as it was unpleasant, but when one's feelings have been schooled to avoid losses to the country and sacrifices to the people, one has enough courage to face dangers and not vacillate in subjecting one's dignity to a noble cause. I was accompanied by Councillors Carrillo and Val, also by the Leader of the Falange, Señor Santa Maria and others. As I came out of the Presidency, I noticed that the Assault Guards, who had been on guard outside it, had left. People I met in the street gave the Fascist salute. The Plaza de la Republica was a swarm of people on foot or in lorries, running about like lunatics with hysterical shouts and nationalist flags. It was a repulsive spectacle, but a very significant one. The happiness of the majority came from the fact that war was ended. The Nationalist leaders had no control over their forces.

When I arrived at the doors of Radio Valencia the Assault Guards who were on guard there presented arms to the sound of the Royal March. It was not a time to show any violent excitement, and as a reply to this sort of ill-bred behaviour, I contented myself with sticking my hands in my pockets.

In the room where the microphone had been set up there were a good many people, most of them, it would seem, Nationalists. The announcer told me that he should introduce me as "Segismundo Casado", to which I replied

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that the man who was about to speak was "*Excelentísimo Señor*, Councillor for National Defence, Don Segismundo Casado," and he announced me in that form. I spoke for some minutes, asking everyone to keep calm, to avoid fighting and bloodshed which could bring terrible consequences. At the very moment in which I finished speaking, before I had got up from my seat, the Royal March was played in the room. To this piece of bad manners I replied by remaining seated with my head resting on my arm. Such cowardice made me sick. My Republican friends showed their revulsion. The Nationalists, rather put out, made no kind of protest. Afterwards the Leader of the Falange spoke, and seemed pretty excited.

When we came out into the street again, Valencia was a hive of lunatics, most of them boys and girls, less than twenty years old. I saw many faces of older men with tears streaming down their cheeks for the grotesque spectacle which they had to witness.

The Leader of the Falange said good-bye at the doors of Radio Valencia, promising me that everything should be calm very quickly. I told him not to be too optimistic as there was no one to control this. Returning to the Presidency, I called together the Councillors, and we decided to leave Valencia, since we could not do anything useful there, and it was dangerous to stay any longer in view of the situation. While we were preparing to go, four youngsters of fourteen or fifteen years old appeared in my office, armed with rifles. They had come to tell me to

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accompany them to speak on the wireless. Naturally I could not take them seriously and sent them off pretty sharply. They replied that they were Falangists and that they had orders from their leaders that I should go with them. I kicked them out at once, and only one comment occurred to me—Poor Spain!

After a short discussion we decided unanimously to go to Gandia, chosen as a place between Valencia and Alicante, points vital for the evacuation. We quickly arranged the journey and about four o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at the port, after noticing that all the villages on our route were in the hands of the Nationalists.

In the port of Gandia there were about one hundred and fifty people, men and women, who intended to embark and who are now with me in London. They told me that Gandia was in the hands of the Nationalists.

I met certain members of the Committee of Co-ordination, with its President, the French Deputy Señor Forcinal, whom I had known previously when he had visited the Madrid front. They told me of the efforts they had made to get ships into Alicante, and that with respect to Gandia they were attempting at that moment to arrange matters so that all the Spaniards who were in the port should be able to embark quickly on H.M.S. *Galatea*.

Among those who wished to leave there were some in a really frightened condition, and it was necessary to speak to calm them. As time was passing and the British Consul in Valencia had not returned to land, but continued his conversations with the commander of the ship, I took up

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my quarters with the other Councillors and my aides in the building of the Spanish Port Police and telephoned Colonel Burillo in Alicante. From what he told me I got the impression that it was impossible to reach Alicante, but since he told me that there were many thousands of men there I suggested to my companions that we should try to reach it. However, these and certain members of the Co-ordination Committee dissuaded me from this, saying that it was an absolutely useless risk to take.

I asked if there were provisions for all of those who wished to leave the country and they answered me in the negative. Since I did not know how long we should have to stay in the port I gave orders that the Nationalist Military Commandant should hand over rations for two days. He not only agreed to this but added some tobacco rations. Undoubtedly he was convinced that if he refused to give them he would be risking his life, because we still had some machine guns, plenty of revolvers, and a great deal of desperation.

About five o'clock the British Consul in Valencia visited me, saying that his Government had authorised our embarkation in the *Galatea*, but on condition that if Generalissimo Franco were to claim us, the Commander of the ship would have to hand us over to him. As sufficient reply to the condition imposed, I told this gentleman that it was hard to decide whether this condition was more discreditable to those who proposed it, or those who accepted it, and that the Councillors would refuse an offer for which the whole history of hospitality had no pre-

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cedent. I told him, moreover, that as he could understand, we were at the mercy of the Nationalists, and that whatever disasters came from this situation, they would not be our responsibility. We would allow the others to do as they liked. Everybody concurred with this attitude of the Council's, except General Menendez and a few Senior Officers and Officers who decided to embark. When they were going towards the ship a few of those who remained on land got very excited, and one of them threatened General Menendez with death, trying to prevent his embarkation. But fortunately they grew calmer and General Menendez and his companions were able to embark.

Soon after I had finished talking with the British Consul, I was visited by the French Deputy, M. Forcinal, President of the Delegation of the Co-ordination Committee, an indefatigable, intelligent and dynamic man, who was using all his good will to try to save us from such a difficult situation. He told me that in two or three hours' time, a French warship would arrive in Gandia to pick me up, with my General Staff. I told M. Forcinal that I was thankful for the kindness of his Government, but that I could not accept the offer since I should not leave Gandia whilst there was no guarantee of embarkation for all the Spaniards in the port. I explained that I was obliged to act in this way by my position as a member of the Council, and above all as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. M. Forcinal seemed to find my attitude justified but I could see that my refusal to embark had displeased



him. M. Forcinal did not know that I had silenced a mental reserve. I did not wish to accept the offer because I would not put myself under an obligation to a Government which had treated our refugees from Catalonia in such an inhuman way.

At seven o'clock in the evening the British Consul visited me again to tell me that the embarkation of all who were in the port was now authorised, with the absolute guarantee that none of them would be handed over to General Franco, even if he demanded it. Probably to excuse himself, he told me also that what he had said about handing them over had been a mere formality.

His behaviour seemed to me unwarranted, but I concealed my feelings, convinced that this gentleman had not realised that it has always been an accepted thing to show the consideration due to the rank of those who fill responsible positions, and that his conduct left something to be desired.

In view of the solution offered by the British Government, we proceeded to embark. I was pretty ill, and it was some days now since I had eaten anything. As I had to sleep on the open deck I became worse. On the following day, at the suggestion of a delegate of the Co-ordination Committee, I was sent to the ship's infirmary and was treated considerably.

By the British Government's orders we were moved from the *Galatea* to the Hospital Ship *Maine*, also anchored in the port of Gandia. The three days which I spent in that port seemed interminable to me, since it was im-

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possible to get concrete news of what was happening in Alicante.

Later in London I was able to hear everything that happened, through official information which is in my hands and which in a most definite way places the responsibility for that business. I shall deal with it in the next chapter.

I could never have imagined the sorrow of leaving one's country, when one has given to its service all one's will and soul, and more so, leaving it burning like a furnace of hatred and suspicion between fellow-countrymen, whose living together is impossible without some strong form of authority capable of checking brutal reprisals, and leaving it, too, in doubt whether its spiritual and economical reconstruction can be achieved. I left my country, but my heart is still there with those magnificent people whose fate has unhappily been to be governed by incapable and undesirable men, who could not, or did not wish to understand them. A generous and noble people who, in order to be happy, need only that their Government shall be in the hands of competent, austere and energetic men, who mean to make life impossible for all undesirables in high and low places and to give their lives, if it is necessary, for their country and liberty.

## CHAPTER VIII

### I ACCUSE

WHEN I took an exile's way from Spain it was with the firm decision to remain absolutely silent on all that had happened during the war. My reasons for this were twofold. I wanted to return to the anonymity in which I had passed my life, and which I had only left momentarily and through force of circumstances, in view of the tragic situation in the Republican zone of my beloved country. And I consider that all of us expatriated Spaniards have the duty of keeping our self-respect, praying that one day all of us who were in positions of responsibility will face the judgment of the people, to account to them for our acts, and accept their sentence.

But unfortunately Dr. Negrin and the Spanish Communist Party and a few of their sympathisers, do not see things in that way, since almost as soon as the National Council of Defence was formed they started a defamatory campaign against it and especially against me, with the object of presenting me to Spain and to the world as an enemy of liberty and a traitor to my people.

Although this stupid and perverse propaganda confused the issue outside Spain I kept silence, so that nobody could reproach me with having helped to weaken the anti-Fascist movement in Spain.

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But four months have passed now and this propaganda continues in the sphere of politics, so that in the face of such incomprehensible attacks I find myself under the unhappy necessity of revising my decision, and have written this book in defence of my honour, and shall end it with a deed of accusation. Against whom? For the moment I will be satisfied with answering the charges which Dr. Negrin and the Communist Party have made against me. When I appear before the people I will accuse, with proofs, all those of the Right Wing, of the Centre, of the Left, who have been responsible to a greater or lesser degree for the ruination of Spain and the useless and brutal deaths of her finest young men.

What charges does the Communist Party make against me? They are chiefly as follows:

1. That I rebelled against Negrin's Government with the object of handing over Republican Spain to Franco, acting in accord with him and the Governments of France and Great Britain.
2. That after the loss of Catalonia, the Republican Army could have resisted and that the people wanted to continue the war.
3. That I had an understanding with Franco and the French and British Governments to prevent men, who would be held responsible, and who wished to leave Spain for fear of reprisals, from doing so.

My form of accusation will be limited to rebutting these charges.

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The Communists in their libels put the following phrase into my mouth, which according to them, I used to an intimate friend: "I am like an elder brother of Franco's, and what I tell him, he will do."

The Communists suppose that as a former professional soldier I had some kind of dealings or friendship with General Franco. They are unaware of a fact which I can publicly state and do state on my honour, that never in the whole of my life have I exchanged a single word with General Franco. That being so, how can I have the influence of an elder brother with him? They forget also, that I am younger than General Franco, and certainly not old enough for the relationship they attribute to me.

Moreover, my detractors seem to forget the speeches which on various occasions I made to the Nationalist Army, speeches of burning patriotism and of revulsion from Fascism, speeches in which I incited the rebel officers to break the Italo-Germanic yoke and fight for the independence of Spain. They forget that in these speeches I severely criticised the rebel officers and that they had a serious effect on the Nationalists. They forget also that they themselves, my present accusers, sent me warm expressions of regard for my Liberal and anti-Fascist behaviour.

It is quite evident that since I used every just means in my power to incite everyone to rebel against foreign invasion and the Fascist regime, any accord between General Franco and me was impossible.

Lastly, on leaving Spain, I left my wife in the Panama

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Legation in Valencia. Well, my wife was taken out of the Legation by Fascists and imprisoned among prostitutes and common criminals.

What relations had I with the British Government? In Madrid I had three interviews with the British Consul after the *coup d'état*, trying to obtain transport by sea for the evacuation. Afterwards, when I was in Gandia on the day I left the country, I had a conversation with the British Consul in Valencia and that interview was by no means cordial. This gentleman treated me like any person who wanted to leave the country, without any recognition of the respect due to one who had been the head of a Government, and who was still in a position of authority. It is certain that if I had been a friend of England I should have been given a cabin on board the *Galatea*, and more so since I was ill, instead of being allowed to pass the night on the open deck with one mattress as a bed. But that is not all. I have for four months been living in London and the British Government has still not expressed to me its gratitude for the good services which, according to the Communists, I rendered this country. I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere gratitude to the noble and hospitable people of England for the kindly treatment which they have at all time given to Spanish exiles.

What shall I say about my friendship with France? As I have already explained, on the day I left Gandia and a few minutes before embarking on the British ship *Galatea*, the French Deputy, M. Foncinal, offered me embarkation with my General Staff on a torpedo-destroyer of the

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French Navy. I did not accept, firstly because I wanted to take the same chances as the others, and secondly because I could not accept an offer from a Government which had tolerated (I will not say ordered) that Spaniards expatriated from Catalonia should be given such oppressive and inhuman treatment, forgetting that they were driven into France by a great tragedy. Our refugees had set their hopes on the kindness of the French people and had not realised that these people were ruled by a Government determined to give no help to Spanish exiles, since it selfishly believed that it might improve its relationship with General Franco by acting in this way.

And as an eloquent proof of France's gratitude for my services (according to the Communists), I offer the following fact. During my first days in London I went to the French Embassy to ask for permission to live in France, since certain old friends there had undertaken to solve the problem of my livelihood. I went several times to the French Embassy for its Government's answer to the petition which I had made. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs answered in a letter which reads as follows:

*"The French Embassy, London, April 28th, 1939.*  
*Monsieur—*The Minister for Foreign Affairs to whom the Embassy has referred your request, answers that owing to the considerable number of Spanish Refugees who are already on French territory it is not thought possible to consider favourably your petition

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or that of your two compatriots. I find myself obliged, most unwillingly, to have to communicate to you this negative decision."

(The signature is illegible.)

It may be seen from this letter that the French Government considers me as just another exile. Any democrat would be pleased to find that the principle of Equality is still practised in France, but personally I must state that this answer made me extremely indignant, because I knew that at that time Dr. Negrin and his pseudo-Government were living in Paris, and had complete freedom of movement. I should not like to suppose that these differences in treatment could be accounted for by the certain fact that Dr. Negrin had large sums of money under his control, money which had been taken out of Spain, whilst I had exactly one handbag containing only personal belongings. I should not like to suppose this, because it would be to assume that certain members of the French Government had a very poor conception of public dignity and decency.

The Communists say that I had been preparing a *coup d'état* from the month of May 1938, the date on which I took over command of the Central Army. If they make this declaration in the hope of showing that ten months were necessary to remove their political apparatus from Spain, it seems to me very reasonable that they should take advantage of this kind of artifice. But I am perfectly certain that nobody in Spain will believe it. My speeches



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in July, September and October 1938 were not preparations for a *coup d'état*, to be carried out by arrangement with Franco.

They also proclaim to the four winds that since the month of December of 1938 I had daily interviews with Señor Besteiro. In making this statement they suppose that Señor Besteiro and I knew one another at that time, and are not aware that, as I can and do state publicly and on my honour, I had only spoken to Señor Besteiro three times before the *coup d'état* was made. Before the loss of Catalonia we met at the house of a mutual friend, not by chance, but because of a mutual wish to know one another. He spoke to me about international politics and, very discreetly, about national politics. We had our second and third interviews after the loss of Catalonia. In these both Señor Besteiro and I were most explicit, so explicit and so much in accord that we needed no further interviews. I found in Señor Besteiro a Spaniard and an anti-Fascist one hundred per cent, above all things determined to save Spain.

Moreover, Don Julian Besteiro has been condemned by the Nationalists to thirty years' imprisonment, and the prosecution asked for the death sentence. The whole world knows this, just as the whole world knows that when the Spanish people heard that the death sentence was being demanded for Señor Besteiro, protests were made in Valencia, in Barcelona, in Madrid and in other parts of Spain, which reached a point of violence, to make the Tribunal refuse the sentence demanded by the prosecution.

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These facts prove incontrovertibly that Señor Besteiro was not in the service of General Franco and that the people feel for this great patriot affection and respect which come from their conviction that so far from having betrayed them he defended them honourably and gallantly.

I held no meetings with representatives of the political parties and syndicalist organisations in preparation for a *coup d'état* until after the fall of Catalonia and when I was completely convinced of the impossibility of the Popular Front and the Communist Party working together. Then and then only I gave them my opinion, with which they entirely concurred.

I should like to add that the civilians who had places on the Council were there explicitly to represent their respective parties and organisations, and were therefore authentic representatives of the people. Moreover these men, well tried in political and social struggles, would not have allowed themselves to be led into any kind of treason. The people know what their conduct was, and I am sure that they will always feel the most profound gratitude towards them.

The Higher Commands of the Army did not know my purpose until a few days before the *coup d'état*, for I kept it secret until the last moment, so as to avoid any kind of indiscretion upsetting the realisation of something as important as it was necessary.

In case I have not said sufficient to destroy the first charge which the Communists bring against me, I will add that the National Council of Defence approved my

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determination not to tolerate any foreign interference in peace negotiations and that the Nationalist Government agreed to the same. That is to say, that the Nationalists and the Republicans were of the same opinion about this, but without being able to reach accord, since there was from the first no means of doing so. The Republicans were determined to have no foreign intervention but to rely on their own goodwill, whilst the Nationalists agreed probably because Germany and Italy did not want mediation by France and Great Britain.

Having answered the first charge, I will go on to deal with the second.

According to the Communists, after the fall of Catalonia the Republican Army still could have resisted and the people still wished to continue the war. This perverse and gratuitous affirmation will anger all Spaniards and foreign anti-Fascists who knew the tragic situation of Republican Spain, as it will anger the reader when he knows what follows.

I can definitely state that the Republican Army lacked all power of resistance to an enemy offensive, not only because of the weakness of our defensive organisation, but also on account of the quantity and quality of troops, officers and armaments.

Let us examine the appearance of our fronts at that time. I am not referring to those which were in the worst condition, but to the territory which was best organised and garrisoned by selected units with the best arms of the Popular Army—I mean the heroic Central Army. When Catalonia fell, this Army had 95,000 rifles, 1,600 machine-

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gun rifles, 1,400 machine guns, 150 pieces of artillery, 30 anti-tank guns, 50 trench mortars and 10 tanks. With these armaments it had to cover a front of 600 kilometres and maintain a reserve of twenty-five per cent of that force, so that by a rough calculation one may arrive at the following figures: A sector of five kilometres had a firing power of 500 rifles, 10 automatic arms, one piece of artillery, one-fifth of an anti-tank gun; with this also against it, that a great part of the armaments had deteriorated. One does not need to be a military technician to see that these fronts were not defended, but very lightly held, and that it was materially impossible to hold the enemy's advance even if the Army had good fortifications, defended by well-trained troops, well led, and with good morale.

Unfortunately, our fortifications were deficient. Our lack of military technicians meant that junior officers had had to use their own initiative in the organisation of fighting territory, for which they generally worked on untechnical lines, abusing the principle of continuous trenches and with a lamentable lack of resistance centres. It was thus that I found the Central Army's front in May 1938, that is to say, after twenty months of war, when it was being said that Madrid was impregnable though actually its gates were wide open. In spite of the efforts made in the ten months of my command to perfect the organisation of this territory, I only managed to get some improvements which in nowise made that theatre of operations strongly defensible.

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Our magnificent soldiers were the best in the Republic, sober, disciplined and brave, but being constantly subjected to life in the trenches they were badly instructed for manœuvres. The Senior Officers and Officers, who generally speaking had the good qualities of their troops, could not with the best will in the world supply this technical training. The troops had lived in a state of semi-starvation for some months, and many soldiers had passed the winter in the trenches of the Sierra front without shoes and without greatcoats, though not a single grumble had passed their lips. These were the soldiers of the Republic. Sometimes, when I remember their self-sacrifice, many of them nameless heroes and martyrs, I am proud to be a Spaniard. But they remind me, too, of all those wretched men who lived on the war, leading a life of pleasure and feathering their own nests. My indignation passes all bounds. I can only hope that one day they will receive justice.

Besides these weaknesses we had no strategic reserves, since although we were engaged in a defensive war there had been the offensives at Brunete, Teruel, Aragon and Extremadura which had as a foreseen result the exposure of our impotence and the useless waste of our meagre supplies.

As opposed to this helpless condition of ours the enemy, with the high morale which comes from victory, had thirty-two divisions in reserve, well supplied with automatic arms and artillery, supported by great masses of tanks and aeroplanes. He had also the unconditional support of

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Italy and Germany, and what was more important, he had the respect of France and Great Britain, who wished to risk nothing in the Spanish adventure.

In these circumstances to prolong the war meant subjecting the Spanish people to fearful slaughter and the loss of many men who would have fought uselessly for the people's liberty and the country's integrity. The people, starving, and with their morale broken up, publicly and most anxiously demanded peace. The Military High Command informed the Government that it was useless to prolong the war, but nevertheless, Dr. Negrin, who had abandoned his peace negotiations as a failure, kept up his cry of resistance.

The people loathed this Government, to which the Communists gave the pompous name of Dr. Negrin's Government of National Union. The title could not have been more inaccurate, since it was not a Government, there was nothing National about it, and Dr. Negrin was not at its head. It was an anti-Spanish dictatorship, ruled by the Communist Party.

How did it govern? The Minister of Agriculture, Vicente Uribe, member of the Political Bureau of the Spanish Communist Party, received instructions from his party, which in its turn obeyed instructions from Russia. These were carried out by Dr. Negrin, and if by any chance he opposed any of them, he was over-persuaded by that most calamitous figure in all Spain, I mean Alvarez del Vayo, prototype of the *comunistoide* (a name which we give in Spain to individuals who belong to one party whilst

in reality working for another). Forming a quartet with those we have mentioned was the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Señor Mendez Aspe, who faithfully obeyed Negrin's orders. The other Ministers had lost all sense of dignity, allowing Dr. Negrin to rule them in everything.

This Government, the most dictatorial and arbitrary which Spain has ever known, has piled up terrible responsibilities. It followed a war policy which was contrary to the will of the people and to the good of Spain.

It suspended the prerogatives of the Head of the State, and for that reason for many months it had recourse to a most wretched procedure which was as follows: When the war was going against us there was a protest movement among the political parties and syndicalist organisations so that the President, using his constitutional faculties, tried to remove his confidence from Dr. Negrin. Then the Communist Party issued instructions to all Senior Officers with Communist sympathies to send a message of unconditional loyalty to the Prime Minister. As seventy per cent of the Higher Commands were in the hands of the Communists, the head of the state got the impression that the Army was unconditionally attached to Dr. Negrin.

Negrin's behaviour in allowing these expressions of loyalty made possible the monstrous situation of an essentially popular army being in a state of latent rebellion against the power which represented moderation, a situation which for an army has never existed before in Spain. Negrin's Government has much to answer for, but nothing more serious than this.

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In matters of administration the behaviour of this Government passed the limits of the imagination. On several occasions when Dr. Negrin's party asked him that as one of its members he would give some account of the state of the country's Exchequer, he replied: "That I will not reveal to my right hand." During his period in power, he gave no account either to the Parliament or to the Ministers. As there is no debt which ever remains unpaid, nor any account which must not one day be settled, sooner or later Dr. Negrin will have to give an account of his administration, and then the people and posterity will judge him implacably.

This was the Government which kept up the cry of Resistance, a slogan received from Russia, who wished that the war should go on to upset international equilibrium and, fundamentally, to take the flag of Bolshevik war into Spain, at the cost of the blood of Spaniards.

But the really monstrous thing, which showed a contemptuous indifference for Spain and the Spaniards, was the fact that at the meeting in Albacete of the High Command of the Army, at which Dr. Negrin presided, all those generals considered that the war ought to end at once, and Dr. Negrin stuck to his idea of resistance. This happened on the 27th of February. Well, *before* that day the Government had given urgent orders to Colonel Trejo of the Engineers, who was buying aviation material in U.S.A., to set about selling all the aviation material bought in that country at a minimum price of half of its value.



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On the 4th of March, one day before the *coup d'état*, Señor de los Rios, Spanish Ambassador in the United States, sent the following dispatch to Indalecio Prieto, who was then in Mexico:

"Mr. Sherover offers ten per cent of the price of the twenty-two Bellenca machines with fittings. This offer has not been accepted since our orders are to sell them at fifty per cent of their value. Request you to arrange for their sale in Mexico."

That is to say that Dr. Negrin was keeping up his cry of resistance but at the same time ordering the sale of aircraft already acquired, in spite of the fact that we needed this aircraft to continue fighting. This cannot be justified on any grounds.

In spite of the fact that there was an abundance of proofs and arguments to show that it was necessary to make peace at once, I should like to destroy the charge which the Communists have made against me on this point. Evidently there were only two things to do: stop the fight, or go on with it. We will examine the advantage and disadvantages of both of these.

If peace were negotiated with greater or less success, it is clear that we should have been saved the horrors of great enemy offensives which would have cost many deaths among the civil population and among the army units. It is certain that there would be none of the acts of bloodshed which would result from the demoralisation of an army of 800,000 in retreat, and the enemy would have no

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pretext for severe repressions. His military and political victory would have been so much less, while lastly there would have been a strong probability of our being able to arrange for the evacuation of all, or most, of those who wished to leave the country for fear of reprisals.

If, on the other hand, instead of negotiating peace, we had kept up the idea of resistance, apart from the fact that this was absolutely against the will of the people, the havoc would have been greater in proportion to the useless resistance of our forces when they tried to hold the enemy's advance. There would also have been in all probability acts of madness, caused by collective panic in crowded areas and in the villages through which the forces would pass in their wild retreat, and a pretext for making terrible reprisals given to an enemy who in these circumstances would have won a crushing victory. Moreover, although as things happened not many of us managed to leave the country, it is certain that if we had gone on resisting not *one* would have been able to do so, since if France and Great Britain gave us very little help when the war was over because they did not wish to antagonise Franco and the totalitarian states, it is evident that before the triumphal advance of the Nationalist armies and our disorderly retirement these countries would have turned their backs entirely on our tragic situation, and the blockade by the Nationalist Fleet would have been complete.

I thought much before starting peace negotiations about the advantages and disadvantages of both courses, and I

came to the conclusion that resistance would be a crime of *lèse patrie*, and an offence against the Spanish people. For that reason, I did not hesitate. Facts have shown since then that I was not mistaken. From the moment in which the negotiations started no one was killed in the army nor among the civilians, the army was quietly dissolved and a good many of those held responsible left the country. Moreover any reprisals which the Nationalists may now make will be a monstrous injustice, with unfavourable consequences for them. Death sentences have been passed on certain men considered responsible who, if we had resisted, would not have escaped this sentence; but on the other hand many are still alive, very many, who if there had been resistance would have been shot. Lastly, the Nationalists have not achieved the Military victory which they supposed, and the totalitarians have had to renounce their political victory. In these facts lies the justification for my clear conscience. I end my answer to the second charge with the following enquiry:

Dr. Negrin and members of the Political Bureau of the Spanish Communist Party, if, when I rebelled against the Negrin Government you fled from Spain, is not it evident that you would have done the same if the war had gone on, leaving the army and the people behind in a state of tragic despair?

The third charge which the Communists make against me is the following: That I had an understanding with Franco and the French and British Governments to prevent men, who would be held responsible and who

wished to leave Spain for fear of reprisals, from doing so.

The National Council of Defence did everything possible to save those who wished to leave the country. The reasons why it was impossible to do more, as all the members of the National Council of Defence wished, were the bad faith of those who would not give us facilities, and the sudden precipitation of events. The National Council of Defence considered that a solution for the problem of evacuation was the first of its obligations. It was moved to this by the keenest humanitarian sentiments of its members and the certain fact that a solution of this problem would be a political success of incalculable value for the Council.

The whole responsibility of what happened in Alicante rests on the shoulders of the pseudo-Government of Negrin and the French Government. I have more than sufficient proof for this, which leaves no room for doubt.

After the *coup d'état*, Negrin's pseudo-Government left Spain by aeroplane. The members of the Council of Ministers had contracted responsibilities of such a kind that their arrest would have been perfectly justified, but the National Council of Defence, which was formed to seek cordiality and peace, let them go. One would have thought these men would have taken refuge in foreign countries and shown no sign of life whilst they waited for the terrible sentence which justice must mete out to them. But having fled from the people's justice they have the impertinence to continue calling themselves the Government of the Republic and they

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administer very ample funds which have been placed in foreign countries by unofficial methods. So that nothing shall be lacking in this fightful farce, they keep up a Permanent Deputation of the Spanish Cortes, the members of which, like those of the Government, continue drawing their salaries and so on, with their hopes set on the possibility that one day circumstances will allow them to fight their way back to power.

When the situation was at its worst, on the 13th of March, the National Council of Defence agreed to send the Supplies Chief of the Army, Don Trifon Gomez, to Paris with certain important missions, among them, the following:

To attempt to get the provisions already bought by the Negrin Government sent to Spain. To get information about the possibility of using the ships of the Mid-Atlantic Company to carry those evacuating.

The results of his attempts could not have been more depressing, as may be seen in the following paragraphs which I transcribe from a long and meticulous report sent by the Supplies Chief:

"Members of the Council of Campsa-Gentibus and its Director, Señor Luchsinger, met on the said day, the President only being absent (Don Demetrio Delgado de Torres). I gave them full details of the situation and it was decided to ask the President to meet the

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Council on the following day to deal with the matters I had brought up. Therefore on the 21st of March the Council of Campsa-Gentibus met in the morning and afternoon, examining line by line the situation with regard to the goods which Campsa-Gentibus had acquired since February 17th, and reached the following conclusion:

*Wheat:* A default of 13,000 tons below the 45,000 which had been contracted for with the C.R.E.P.A. without Campsa-Gentibus, 6,400 tons having already been taken on board the steamer *Lulka* and about 1,600 tons ready for shipment.

*Vegetables:* Supplies exhausted through all that we had having been sent to Spain.

*Tinned Meat:* Cargo of 3,600 tons bought in Buenos Aires but handed over to the Mid-Atlantic Shipping Co., since Don Francisco Mendez Aspe had given orders for its sale.

*Dried Fish:* Contract for 3,000 tons arranged by Campsa-Gentibus with an English firm cancelled by the order of Don Francisco Mendez Aspe.

*Condensed Milk and Coffee:* 4,800 tins of condensed milk at Port Vendres and 93 tons of coffee, besides certain other goods, has been handed over to the refugees in concentration camps."

In a word, Campsa-Gentibus had no goods to offer the Supplies Chief for provisioning Republican Spain.

This information makes quite clear the total lack of

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patriotism or of feeling for their people of Dr. Negrin and his followers, since before the 21st March they had given orders for the sale of an enormous quantity of provisions, through which the question of supplies, which had been serious enough, was made desperate. What object had they? Just that chaos should come with all its tragic consequences.

Later the Supplies Chief says in his report:

*“Evacuation Question:* In the telegram which I received from Don Julian Besteiro and in the other to which I have referred, I was ordered to visit the Mexican Ambassador in Paris to ask for concrete information about the assistance which the Mexican Government could give to the National Council of Defence in the evacuation of emigrants from that zone. The Mexican Ambassador was not in Paris and consequently I could not carry out this charge, but I had information from people who are often at the Embassy and who advised me not to take up the question with the official who was taking the Ambassador's place.

“To a deputation from the Society of Friends who interviewed me on the 24th March to ask me if we were disposed to allow them to make direct approaches to Burgos to attain peace by any means I replied that we should be pleased for them to attempt anything which would facilitate the evacuation of Spaniards who had to leave the Republican zone.

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"With respect to the ships of the Mid-Atlantic Shipping Co., whose lading capacity is more than 150,000 tons, I was told that the one called the *Superioridad* could not be counted upon because the hire was not paid. Of the Mid-Atlantic Company also was the *Maritima* of 9,000 tons, whose captain committed the action of casting off from the port of Alicante at 3 o'clock in the morning of the 28th March with forty refugees on board, leaving on the docks some two hundred persons, among them the ex-Governor of Madrid, José Gomez Osorio. The Mid-Atlantic Company, an enterprise absolutely in the confidence of the Negrin Government in whose name were placed the stores of merchandise from Campsa-Gentibus, has handed over the documents and goods which it possesses to the Burgos Government, ignoring all formalities."

It would be interesting to discover who gave orders to the captain of the *Maritima* for this action. As this ship had for some time been at the orders of the Negrin Government, one must suppose that the captain in question obeyed instructions not to evacuate more than the forty chosen people to whom the report refers.

Moreover, the Negrin Government had the ships of the Mid-Atlantic Company under contract, with a lading capacity of more than 150,000 tons, and according to facts which are in the hands of the National Council of Defence the contract was not cancelled until May 1st.



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But even supposing that it was not so, it is beyond doubt that Negrin's Government, in view of the fearful situation that existed, should have contracted ships to facilitate evacuation, since it then controlled fabulous sums of money which are now the subject of litigation. Why did it not do so? Clearly and simply because of its malicious wish that the National Council of Defence should fail. This fact, which must be repulsive to every honest conscience, shows the immorality and perversity of those who called themselves defenders of the people and of liberty.

As I have already said, the French Government shares the responsibility with the pseudo-Government of Negrin. As a clear proof of this statement, I will simply say that the National Council of Defence obtained absolutely nothing from the French Government and the same thing happened to the International Committee of Co-ordination, in spite of the interest which both of these organisations had in such a humane enterprise. The uselessness of their attempts is shown in the following documents.

### INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF CO-ORDINATION AND INFORMATION FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF REPUBLICAN SPAIN.

Press communication, 4th April, 1939. Urgent request for insertion.

The International Committee of Co-ordination and Information for the help of Republican Spain, after having heard the International Delegation on its return from Spain, is aware of erroneous reports in the press and wishes to state the following: The Inter-

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national Delegation which had gone to Republican Spain to carry out the work of provisioning civilians and gathering useful information, owing to the rapid course of events since its arrival, has been obliged to undertake a new duty—the evacuation of numerous Republican persons, scientists, writers, soldiers and politicians, among whom there are thousands of friends of France but are, of all them, in danger of death.

For six days all these persons, whose salvation is to the interest of France, have been in danger of death in the port of Alicante where there is a French member of the delegation, the Deputy Carlos Tillon. Up to this moment in spite of the promises repeated by the French Government the ships of the Committee of Co-ordination have not been able to enter the port of Alicante, and the French warships which ought to have guaranteed their safety have received no orders to protect ships and transports sailing under the French flag.

To-day it is still possible to save men, women and children, who, we formally undertake, will go to Mexico.

The International Committee of Co-ordination which, during the whole war, has had as its mission a strictly humanitarian work (supply of provisions, health material, etc.) considers it to be its unavoidable duty to carry out this mission to the last, now that it has become a saving of human lives actually threatened.

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The International Committee of Co-ordination has made itself responsible. To-day it has notified the Ministers involved, so that they may take measures, and can confirm this to the Burgos Government, which is recognised by France, and with which diplomatic and commercial relations have been resumed.

The International Committee of Co-ordination, taking the initiative in this action, is sure of meeting response in the purest tradition and spirit of the democracies, which have always considered generosity and humanity to be their law.

### INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF CO-ORDINATION AND INFORMATION FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF REPUBLICAN SPAIN.

Communicated to the press, April 6th, 1939.  
Prompt insertion requested.

### THE TRUTH ABOUT A STRANGE REPORT.

There appeared in the press yesterday a report from an official source declaring that the French Government had done all that was necessary to save the four thousand Spanish Republicans who are in danger of death at Alicante. This statement was based on no more than these two points; on the one hand the sending of a telegram to the French Consul in Alicante dated the 29th March, and on the other, an approach made to the Burgos Government by the Quai D'Orsay on Wednesday, April 25th.

With regard to the first point, we ought to state that the telegram reached the French Consul in Alicante on the 30th. It authorised him to evacuate by any means in his power certain Spanish persons selected by him, but at the same time it sent to Alicante no means of carrying out this evacuation, and the torpedo destroyer *El Tigre* which should have arrived on the 30th, arrived on the 31st at Gandia.

Having stated this, the strange official note passes at once from the 29th of March to the 5th of April. The Quai D'Orsay was surely aware that since the 30th or 31st of March, the date on which it had received a telegram from the French Consul in Alicante, a neutral zone had existed which was permitted by the Italian authorities who occupied the city.

In spite of repeated appeals of an extremely anxious kind from the organisation for helping Spain, the Government then passed twenty-four hours without doing anything under the pretext that the French Minister of the Interior had not authorised these four thousand Spanish Republicans to disembark in France, even in transit.

These lost twenty-four hours for which the French Government is responsible might have been decisive in the Alicante affair. In any case on the Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (on which depended, according to the other ministries, a decision in this matter) gave our

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organisation formal and repeated promises which have not been fulfilled, and to which the official note does not dare to make any reference.

On the morning of April 4th the Italian press published a note referring to the bombardment and capture of the port of Alicante. After twenty-four hours' reflection the Quai D'Orsay, probably completely reassured by this news, at last decided to approach Burgos, a proof that they had not already done so, and that they had waited until it was too late, at least in their opinion.

We would point out, moreover, that ships of the International Committee of Co-ordination were off Alicante from March 29th and that only the absence of French warships prevented them from entering the harbour and making sure of the evacuation. During this time, English and French torpedoes made sure of saving Colonel Casado of the National Council of Defence and certain Spanish Republicans as well as 167 Italian Fascists who were taken to Palma de Mallorca.

Also, it is not true that it was only local authorities in Alicante who had agreed to the neutral zone.

We remember that in Valencia before members of the International Delegation and a dozen persons, Col. Casado declared:

"Generalissimo Franco has promised me that he will not oppose the evacuation. He has signed no

document because that would be a humiliation which one cannot ask from a victor. But you can trust his word. All the promises he has made to me have been kept."

Finally the official communication speaks neither of the French Deputy, Charles Tillon, blockaded in Alicante, of whom there has been no news for four days, nor of the French Consul in Alicante of whom the Italian communiqués say, "he who was the French Consul in Alicante."

Facts prove that French responsibility is shown by the imprisonment of four thousand Spanish Republicans by Italian troops under General Gambara. Nobody can deny this and no report can conceal this truth.

It is certain that these men could still be saved.

We ask that the French and British Governments should intervene with the Burgos Government for the immediate liberation of these four thousand Republicans, and permission to evacuate them in the merchant vessels of the International Committee of Co-ordination which remain off Alicante.

We ask that all facilities both juridical and parliamentary, be given to the International Commission, which the International Committee of Co-ordination proposes to send to Alicante.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF CO-ORDINATION AND  
INFORMATION FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF REPUBLICAN  
SPAIN.

Prompt insertion requested.

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC.

M. le President,—You must be aware of a matter which has profoundly touched the emotions and public opinion of this country, and in which the honour of France is deeply compromised. We refer to what may legitimately be called the tragedy of Alicante.

We have compromised our responsibility and the honour of our country by promising to thousands of Spanish Republicans who represent the choice spirits of a friendly nation and are threatened by immediate death, that their lives shall be saved thanks to assistance from France, Great Britain and the great democracies.

After a week of useless gestures and unfulfilled promises, the French and British Governments announced that they had made approaches to the Burgos Government. It has been officially affirmed that these approaches have as their purpose the honouring of a promise already given.

Our surprise and alarm are great on seeing the curious form which these approaches seem to have taken, at least if one may judge by the latest reports from official sources.

We must point out again that a member of our delegation has voluntarily remained in Alicante with the threatened Republicans to demonstrate that we wish to accept the responsibility for promises which we have made in the name of France to the very end with all the consequences. After the return to France of the rest of the Delegations we have taken to heart the fulfilment of a mission in which our friend, Charles Tillon, will share the fate of the four thousand threatened Spanish Republicans, since he has stayed with them.

We cannot understand, and public opinion in this country will not admit, that such strange and shameful bargaining should continue, bargaining which forgets that the presence of our friend Tillon in Alicante is simply due to his wish for the salvation of four thousand Spanish Republicans.

Moreover, we can in no way understand, nor do we know what may be the difference between a French Deputy who has been wrongfully kept by a Government with whom we are not at war, and a High Officer of the regular Spanish Army, or any other Republican personality, who is a refugee, and not a prisoner, in France, and should enjoy the normal regime of all refugees.

We also remember that they are Italian troops who have occupied Alicante and who are surrounding the French Consulate in which our friend Tillon is at this moment, according to news sent out by the Quai D'Orsay.



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In the port of Alicante there is a French merchant vessel flying the French flag, placed by our organisation at the disposition of the British and French Governments to assure the evacuation of the four thousand Spanish Republicans, of our friend Tillon, and, if it is necessary, of the French Consul in Alicante.

This matter cannot be at this moment a question for negotiations, still less for compromises. It can only be one question, that is of saving the four thousand Republicans and of the Frenchmen who share their fate.

We are persuaded, Mr. le President, that this affair in which the honour of our country is compromised, in which the fate of thousands of men depends on your decision, will receive your attention and that you will use your authority in such a noble cause.

Signed for the International Delegation.

ALBERT FORCINAL (Deputy. Vice-President of  
the Army Commission.)

RIGAL (Deputy).

BERNARD MAUPOIL (Colonial Administrator).

ANDRE ULLMANN.

DR. KALMANOVITCH.

A copy of this letter addressed to the President of the Republic was sent by the International Committee of Co-ordination to President of the Council, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the President of the Chamber of Deputies,

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the President of the Senate, the French Embassy in Burgos, the British Embassy in Paris.

In these two documents, it is made quite clear that the French Government had firmly decided not to help in these most humanitarian efforts, probably because it thought it was more useful to avoid misunderstandings with Generalissimo Franco and the Totalitarians.

Having answered the charges which the Negrin Government and the Spanish Communist Party have made against the Council and against me with such audacity and stupidity, I can calmly wait for the sentence of posterity and of the people, till the happy day comes in which I can face the people as my judge to give account of my behaviour and formulate charges against all, absolutely all, who are guilty of so much disgrace and ruin. I will end this book with the following provisional accusations which in due course I will make definite:

I accuse the Negrin Government of being responsible for the political sequestration of the Head of the State from the month of May 1938.

I accuse the Negrin Government of having allowed the fundamental laws of the State to be suspended from the month of May 1938.

I accuse the Negrin Government of having prevented the functioning of the Cortes, refusing with marked obstinacy to give account of their administration.

I accuse the Negrin Government of having tolerated the domination of the Communist Party in directing the war,

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creating among combatants a state of suspicion and disconfidence which often produced assassinations and contributed notably to their lack of fighting efficiency.

I accuse the Negrin Government of having ordered the re-selling of war material while still keeping up its cry of resistance.

I accuse the Negrin Government of having ordered the re-selling of provisions in fabulous quantities in the space of time between the fall of that Government and the end of the war, knowing, as it well knew, the ghastly situation of the army and the civil population with respect to supplies.

And lastly, I accuse the Negrin Government of having refused to use the means of sea transport which it had, to save those men who would be held responsible and who wished to leave the country.

That is all.

With a clear conscience I remain in exile in the hope that one day the three ideals in which I believe will become reality: Justice, Liberty, and the Republic.



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